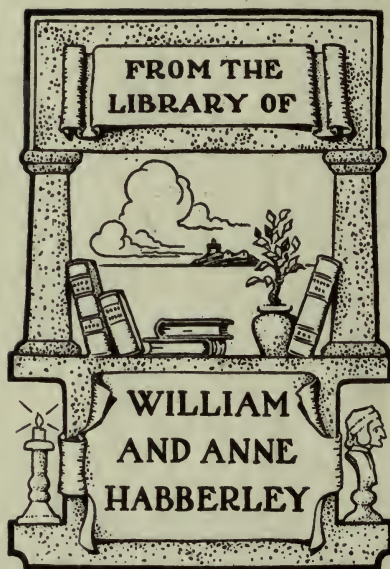
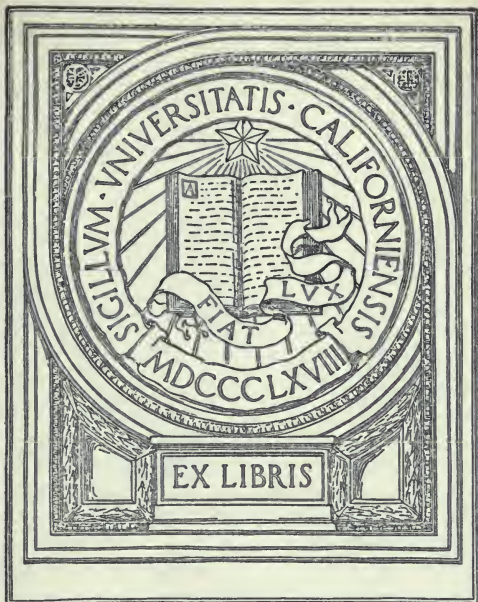


THE BOOK-WORM

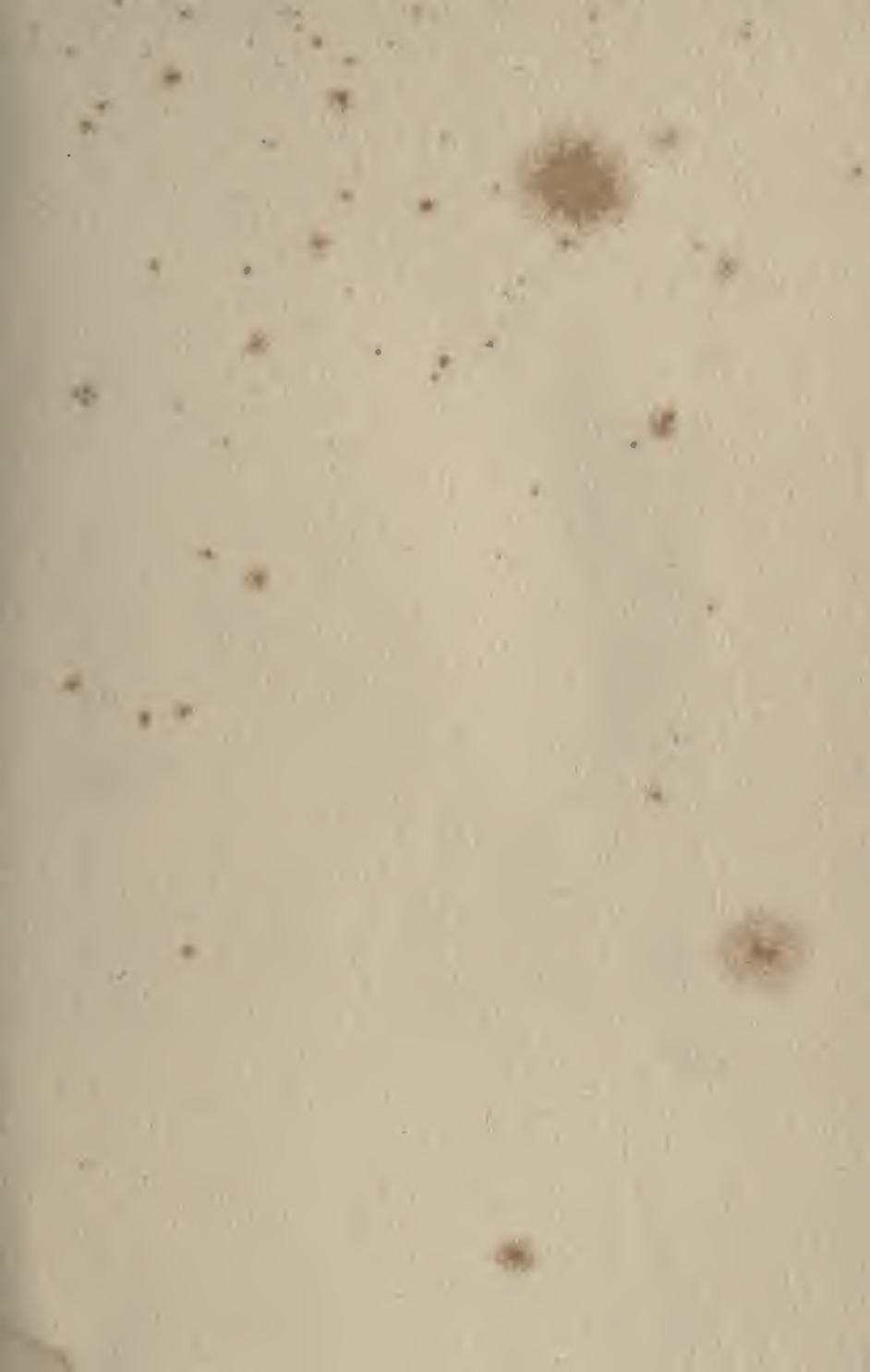
IRVING BROWNE.

Roycrofters/1897









IN MEMORY OF
WILLIAM C. HABBERLEY









IN THE TRACK OF THE BOOK-
WORM  by Irving Browne: thoughts,
fancies and gentle gibes on Collecting and
Collectors   



DONE INTO A BOOK AT THE ROYCROFT
PRINTING SHOP AT EAST AURORA,
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Of this edition but five hundred and ninety copies
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Iving Browne


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TO BOOK-WORMS all, of high or low degree,
Whate'er of madness be their stages,
And just as well unknown as known to me,
I dedicate these trifling pages,
In hope that when they turn them o'er
They will not find the Track a bore.







The Track of the Book-Worm.

I.

OBJECTS OF COLLECTION.



PHILOSOPHERS have made various and ingenious but incomplete attempts to form a succinct definition of the animal, Man. At first thought it might seem that a perfect definition would be, an animal who makes collections. But one must remember that the magpie does this. Yet this definition is as good as any, and comes nearer exactness than most. What has not the animal Man collected? Clocks, watches, snuff-boxes, canes, fans, laces, precious stones, china, coins, paper money, spoons, prints, paintings, tulips, orchids, hens, horses, match-boxes, postal stamps, miniatures, violins, show-bills, play-bills, swords, buttons, shoes, china slippers, spools, birds, butterflies, beetles, saddles, skulls, wigs, lanterns, book-plates, knockers, crystal balls, shells, penny toys, death-masks, tea-pots, auto-



**The
Book-
Worm**

graphs, rugs, armour, pipes, arrow heads, locks of hair and key locks, and hats (Jules Verne's "Tale of a Hat"), these are some of the most prominent subjects in search of which the animal Man runs up and down the earth, and spends time and money without scruple or stint ♣ But all these curious objects of search fall into insignificance when compared with the ancient, noble and useful passion for collecting books. One of the wisest of the human race said, the only earthly immortality is in writing a book ; and the desire to accumulate these evidences of earthly immortality needs no defense among cultivated men.




II.

WHO HAVE COLLECTED BOOKS.

*The
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HE mania for book-collecting is by no means a modern disease, but has existed ever since there were books to gather, and has infected many of the wisest and most potent names in history. Euripides is ridiculed by Aristophanes in "The Frogs" for collecting books.

Of the Roman emperor, Gordian, who flourished (or rather did not flourish, because he was slain after a reign of thirty-six days) in the third century, Gibbon says, "twenty-two acknowledged concubines and a library of sixty thousand volumes attested the variety of his inclinations." This combination of uxorious and literary tastes seems to have existed in another monarch of a later period—Henry VIII.—the seeming disproportion of whose expenditure of 10,800 pounds for jewels in three years, during which he spent but 100 pounds for books and binding, is explained by the fact that he was indebted for the contents of his libraries to the plunder of monasteries. Henry printed a few copies of his book against Luther on vellum  Cicero, who possessed a superb library, especially rich in Greek, at his villa in Tusculum, thus describes his favorite acquisitions: "Books to quicken the intelligence of youth, delight age, dec-


orate prosperity, shelter and solace us in adversity, bring enjoyment at home, befriend us out-of-doors, pass the night with us, travel with us, go into the country with us."




PETRARCH, who collected books not simply for his own gratification, but aspired to become the founder of a permanent library at Venice, gave his books to the Church of St. Mark; but the greater part of them perished through neglect, and only a small part remains. Boccaccio, anticipating an early death, offered his library to Petrarch, his dear friend, on his own terms, to insure its preservation, and the poet promised to care for the collection in case he survived Boccaccio; but the latter, outliving Petrarch, bequeathed his books to the Augustinians of Florence, and some of them are still shown to visitors in the Laurentinian Library. From Boccaccio's own account of his collection, one must believe his books quite inappropriate for a monastic library, and the good monks probably instituted an auto da fe for most of them, like that which befell the knightly romances in "Don Quixote." Perhaps the naughty story-teller intended the donation as a covert satire. The walls of the room which formerly contained Montaigne's books, and is at this day exhibited to pilgrims, are covered with inscriptions burnt in with branding-irons on the beams and rafters by the eccentric and delightful essayist  The author of "Ivanhoe" adorned his magnificent library with


suits of superb armor, and luxuriated in demonology and witchcraft. The caustic Swift was in the habit of annotating his books, and writing on the fly-leaves a summary opinion of the author's merits; whatever else he had, he owned no Shakespeare, nor can any reference to him be found in the nineteen volumes of Swift's works. Military men seem always to have had a passion for books. To say nothing of the literary and rhetorical tastes of Cæsar, "the foremost man of all time," Frederick the Great had libraries at Sans Souci, Potsdam, and Berlin, in which he arranged the volumes by classes without regard to size. Thick volumes he rebound in sections for more convenient use, and his favorite French authors he sometimes caused to be reprinted in compact editions to his taste. The great Conde inherited a valuable library from his father, and enlarged and loved it. Marlborough had twenty-five books on vellum, all earlier than 1496. The hard-fighting Junot had a vellum library which sold in London for 1,400 pounds, while his great master was not too busy in conquering Europe not only to solace himself in his permanent libraries, and in books which he carried with him in his expeditions, but to project and actually commence the printing of a camp library of duodecimo volumes, without margins, and in thin covers, to embrace some three thousand volumes, and which he had designed to complete in six years by employing one hundred and twenty compositors and twenty-five editors, at an outlay of about 163,000 pounds ♣ St.

Helena destroyed this scheme. It is curious to note that Napoleon despised Voltaire as heartily as Frederick admired him, but gave Fielding and Le Sage places among his traveling companions; while the Bibliomaniac appears in his direction to his librarian: "I will have fine editions and handsome bindings. I am rich enough for that." ❀ The main thing that shakes one's confidence in the correctness of his literary taste is that he was fond of "Ossian." Julius Cæsar also formed a traveling library of forty-four little volumes, contained in an oak case measuring 16 by 11 by 3 inches, covered with leather. The books are bound in white vellum, and consist of history, philosophy, theology, and poetry, in Greek and Latin. The collector was Sir Julius Cæsar, of England, and this exquisite and unique collection is in the British Museum. The books were all printed between 1591 and 1616 ❀

OUTHEY brought together fourteen thousand volumes, the most valuable collection which had up to that time been acquired by any man whose means and estate lay, as he once said of himself, in his inkstand. Time fails me to speak of Erasmus, De Thou, Grotius, Goethe, Bodley; Hans Sloane, whose private library of fifty thousand volumes was the beginning of that of the British Museum; the Cardinal Borromeo, who founded the Ambrosian Library at Milan with his own forty thousand volumes, and the other great names entitled to the description of Bibliomaniac.


We must not forget Sir Richard Whittington, of feline fame, who gave 400 pounds to found the library of Christ's Hospital, London. 

The fair sex, good and bad, have been lovers of books or founders of libraries; witness the distinguished names of Lady Jane Gray, Catherine De Medicis, and Diane de Poitiers.

IT ONLY remains to speak of the great opium-eater, who was a sort of literary ghoul, famed for borrowing books and never returning them, and whose library was thus made up of the enforced contributions of friends—for who would have dared refuse the loan of a book to Thomas de Quincey? The name of the unhappy man would have descended to us with that of the incendiary of the Temple of Diana at Ephesus. But the great Thomas was recklessly careless and slovenly in his use of books; and Burton, in the "Book-hunter," tells us that "he once gave in copy written on the edges of a tall octavo 'Somnium Scipionis,' and as he did not obliterate the original matter, the printer was rather puzzled, and made a funny jumble between the letter-press Latin and the manuscript English."  I seriously fear that with him must be ranked the gentle Elia, who said: "A book reads the better which is our own, and has been so long known to us that we know the topography of its blots and dog's ears, and can trace the dirt in it to having read it at tea with buttered muffins, or over a pipe, which I think is the maximum." And yet a

great degree of slovenliness may be excused in Charles because, according to Leigh Hunt, he once gave a kiss to an old folio Chapman's "Homer," and when asked how he knew his books one from the other, for hardly any were lettered, he answered: "How does a shepherd know his sheep?"

The love of books displayed by the sensual Henry and the pugnacious Junot is not more remarkable than that of the epicurean and sumptuous Lucullus, to whom Pompey, when sick, having been directed by his physician to eat a thrush for dinner, and learning from his servants that in summer-time thrushes were not to be found anywhere but in Lucullus' fattening coops, refused to be indebted for his meal, observing: "So if Lucullus had not been an epicure, Pompey had not lived." Of him the voracious Plutarch says: "His furnishing a library, however, deserved praise and record, for he collected very many and choice manuscripts; and the use they were put to was even more magnificent than the purchase, the library being always open, and the walks and reading rooms about it free to all Greeks, whose delight it was to leave their other occupations and hasten thither as to the habitation of the Muses."

IT IS not recorded that Socrates collected books—his wife probably objected—but we have his word for it that he loved them. He did not love the country, and the only thing that could tempt him thither was a book. Acknowledging this to Phædrus he says: 


“Very true, my good friend; and I hope that you will excuse me when you hear the reason, which is, that I am a lover of knowledge, and the men who dwell in the city are my teachers, and not the trees or the country. Though I do indeed believe that you have found a spell with which to draw me out of the city into the country, like a hungry cow before whom a bough or a bunch of fruit is waved. For only hold up before me in like manner a book, and you may lead me all round Attica, and over the wide world. And now having arrived, I intend to lie down, and do you choose any posture in which you can read best.”



III. DIVERSE TASTES.

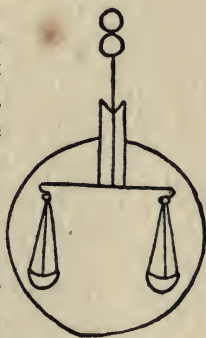


IT IS fortunate for the harmony of book-collectors that they do not all desire the same thing, just as it was fortunate for their young State that all the Romans did not want the same Sabine woman. Otherwise the Hellenic battle of the books would be fiercer than it is.

Thus there are bibliomaniacs who reprint rare books from their own libraries in limited numbers; authors, like Walpole, who print their own works, and whose fame as printers is better deserved than their reputation as writers; like Thackeray, who design the illustrations for their own romances, or, like Astor, who procure a single copy of their novel to be illustrated at lavish expense by artists; amateurs who bind their own books; lunatics who yearn for books wholly engraved, or printed only on one side of the leaf, or Greek books wholly in capitals, or others in the italic letter; or black-letter fanciers; or tall copy men; or rubricists, missal men, or first edition men, or incunabulists 

One seeks only ancient books; another limited editions; another those privately printed; a fourth wants nothing but presentation copies; yet another only those that have belonged to famous men, and still another illustrated or illuminated books. There is a perfectly rabid and incurable class, of whom the most harmless are devoted to pamphlets; another,

rather more dangerous, to incorrect or suppressed editions; and a third, stark mad, to play-bills and portraits. One patronizes the drama, one poetry, one the fine arts, another books about books and their collectors; and a very recherche class devote themselves to works on playing-cards, angling, magic, or chess, emblems, dances of death, or the jest books and facetiæ ♣ Finally, there are those unhappy beings who run up and down for duplicates, searching for every edition of their favorite authors. In very recent days there has arisen a large class who demand the first editions of popular novelists like Dickens, Thackeray and Hawthorne, and will pay large prices for these issues which have no value except that of rarity. I can quite understand the enthusiasm of the collector over the beautiful first editions of the Greek and Latin classics, or for the first "Paradise Lost," or even for the ugly first folio "Shakespeare," and why he should prefer the comparatively rude first Walton's Angler to Pickering's edition, the handsomest of this century, with its monumental title page. But why a first edition of a popular novel should be more desirable than a late one, which is usually the more elegant, I confess I cannot understand. It is one of those things which, like the mystery of religion, we must take on trust. So when a bookseller tells me that a copy of the first issue



The
Book-
Worm

of "The Scarlet Letter" has sold for seventy-five dollars, and that a copy of the second, with the same date, but put out six months later, is worth only seventy-five cents, I open my eyes but not my purse, especially when I consider that the second is greatly superior to the first on account of its famous preface of apology, and when I read of some one's bidding \$1875 for a copy of Poe's worthless "Tamerlane," I am flattered by the reflection that there is one man in the world whom I believe to be eighteen hundred and seventy-five times as great a fool as I am!



IV.
THE SIZE OF BOOKS.

*The
Book-
Worm*



ERE I a despotic ruler of the universe I would make it a serious offense to publish a book larger than royal octavo. Books should be made to read, or at all events to look at, and in this view comfort and ease should be consulted. Any one who has ever undertaken to read a huge quarto or folio will sympathize with this view. The older and lazier the Book-Worm grows the more he longs for little books, which he can hold in one hand without getting a cramp, or at least support with arms in an elbow chair without fatigue. Darwin remorselessly split big books in two. Mr. Slater says in "Book Collecting:" "When the library at Sion College took fire the attendants, at the risk of their lives, rescued a pile of books from the flames, and it is said that the librarian wept when he found that the porters had taken it for granted that the value of a book was in exact proportion to its size." Few of us, I suspect, ever read our family Bible, and all of us probably groan when we lift out the unabridged dictionary. The "Century Dictionary" is a luxury because it is published in small and convenient parts. I cannot conceive any good in a big book except that the ladies may use it to press flowers or mosses in, or the nurses may put

it in a chair to sit the baby on at table. I have heard of a gentleman who inherited a mass of folio volumes and arranged them as shelves for his smaller treasures, and of another who arranged his 12-mos on a stand made up of the seventeen volumes of Pinkerton's "Voyages" and Denon's "Egypt" for shelves. What reader would not prefer a dainty little Elzevir to the huge folio, Cæsar's "Commentaries," even with the big bull in it, and the wicker idol full of burning human victims? What can be more pleasing than the modern Quantin edition of the classics? Or, to speak of a popular book, take the "Pastels in Prose," the most exquisite book for the price ever known in the history of printing. The small book ought however to be easily legible. The health and comfort of the human eye should be consulted in the size of the type. Nothing can be worse in this regard than the Pickering diamond classics, if meant to be read; and it seems that there are too many of them to be intended as mere curiosities of printing. Let us approve the exit of the folio and the quarto, and applaud the modern tendency toward little and handy volumes. Large paper however is a worthy distinction when the subject is worth the distinction and the edition is not too large. Nothing raises the gorge of the true Book-Worm more than to see an issue on large paper of a row of histories, for example; and the very worst instance conceivable was a large paper Webster's "Unabridged Dictionary" issued some years ago. The book thus distinguished ought to be a classic, or pe-

culiar for elegance, never a series, or stereotyped, the first struck off, and the issue ought not to be more than from fifty to one hundred copies; any larger issue is not worth the extra margin bestowed, and no experienced buyer will tolerate it. But if all these conditions are observed, the large paper copies bear the same relation to the small that a proof before letters of a print holds to the other impressions. Large margins are very pleasant in a library as well as in Wall Street, and much more apt to be permanent. There are some favorite books of which the possessor longs in vain for a large copy, as for instance, the Pickering "Walton and Cotton."

A GREAT deal of fun is made of the Book-Worm because of his desire for large paper and of his insistence on uncut edges, but his reasons are sound and his taste is unimpeachable. The tricks of the book-trade to catch the inexperienced with the bait of large paper are very amusing. "Strictly limited" to so many copies for England and so many for America, say a thousand in all, or else the number is not stated, and always described as an edition de luxe, and its looks are always very repulsive. But the bait is eagerly bitten at by a shoal of beings anxious to get one of these rarities—a class to one of whom I once found it necessary to explain that "uncut edges" does not mean leaves not cut open, and that he would not injure the value of his book by being able to read it, and was not bound to peep in surreptitiously like a

maid-servant at a door "on the jar." I once knew a satirical Book-Worm who issued a pamphlet, "one hundred copies on large paper, none on small." There is no just distinction in an ugly large-paper issue, and sometimes it is not nearly so beautiful as the small, especially when the latter has uncut edges. The independence of the collector who prefers the small in such circumstances is to be commended and imitated.

Too great inequality in uncut edges is also to be shunned as an ugliness. It seems that some French books are printed on paper of two different sizes, the effect of which is very grotesque, and the device is a catering to a very crude and extravagant taste.




V.
BINDING.



*The
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HE binding of books for several centuries has held the dignity of a fine art, quite independent of printing. This has been demonstrated by exhibitions in this country and abroad. But every collector ought to observe fitness in the binding which he procures to be executed. True fitness prevails in most old and fine bindings; seldom was a costly garb bestowed on a book unworthy of it. But in many a luxurious library we see a modern binding fit for a unique or rare book given to one that is comparatively worthless or common. Not to speak of bindings that are real works of art, many collectors go astray in dressing lumber in purple and fine linen—putting full levant morocco on blockhead histories and such stuff that perishes in the not using. It is a sad spectacle to behold a unique binding wasted on a book of no more value than a backgammon board. There are of course not a great many of us who can afford unique bindings, but those who cannot should at least observe propriety and fitness in this regard, and draw the line severely between full dress and demi-toilette, and keep a sharp eye to appropriateness of color. I have known several men who bound their books all alike.

Nothing could be worse except one who should bind particular subjects in special styles, pace Mr. Ellwanger, who, in "The Story of My House," advises the Book-Worm to "bind the poets in yellow or orange, books on nature in olive, the philosophers in blue, the French classics in red," etc. I am curious to know what color this pleasant writer would adopt for the binding of his books by military men, such for example as "Major Walpole's Anecdotes." (p. 262) 



AMBROSE FERMIN DIDOT  recommended binding the "Iliad" in red and the "Odyssey" in blue, for the Greek rhapsodists wore a scarlet cloak when they recited the former and a blue one when they recited the latter. The churchmen he would clothe in violet, cardinals in scarlet, philosophers in black 
I have imagined

HOW A BIBLIOMANIAC BINDS HIS BOOKS.



'd like my favorite books to bind
So that their outward dress
To every bibliomaniac's mind
Their contents should express.

Napoleon's life should glare in red,
John Calvin's gloom in blue ;
Thus they would typify bloodshed
And sour religion's hue.

The prize-ring record of the past

Must be in blue and black;
While any color that is fast
Would do for Derby track.

The Popes in scarlet well may go;
In jealous green, Othello;
In gray, Old Age of Cicero,
And London Cries in yellow.

My Walton should his gentle art
In Salmon best express,
And Penn and Fox the friendly heart
In quiet drab confess.

Statistics of the lumber trade
Should be embraced in boards,
While muslin for the inspired Maid
A fitting garb affords.


Intestine wars I'd clothe in vellum,
While pig-skin Bacon grasps,
And flat romances, such as "Pelham,"
Should stand in calf with clasps.

Blind-tooled should be blank verse and rhyme
Of Homer and of Milton;
But Newgate Calendar of Crime
I'd lavishly dab gilt on.

The edges of a sculptor's life
May fitly marbled be,
But sprinkle not, for fear of strife,
A Baptist history.

Crimea's warlike facts and dates
Of fragrant Russia smell;
The subjugated Barbary States
In crushed Morocco dwell.

But oh ! that one I hold so dear
Should be arrayed so cheap
Gives me a qualm ; I sadly fear
My Lamb must be half-sheep.

No doubt a Book-Worm so far gone as this could invent stricter analogies and make even the binder fit the book 

So we should have

THE BIBLIOMANIAC'S ASSIGNMENT OF BINDERS.

If I could bring the dead to day,
I would your soul with wonder fill
By pointing out a novel way
For bibliopegistic skill.

My Walton, Trautz should take in hand,
Or else I'd give him o'er to Hering ;
Matthews should make the Gospels stand
A solemn warning to the erring.

The history of the Inquisition,
With all its diabolic train
Of cruelty and superstition,
Should fitly be arrayed by Payne.

A book of dreams by Bedford clad,
A Papal history by De Rome,

Should make the sense of fitness glad
In every bibliomaniac's home.

As our first mother's folly cost
Her sex so dear, and makes men grieve,
So Milton's plaint of Eden lost
Would be appropriate to Eve.

Hayday would make "One Summer" be
Doubly attractive to the view;
While General Wolfe's biography
Should be the work of Padeloup.

For lives of dwarfs, like Thomas Thumb,
Petit's the man by nature made,
And when Munchasen strikes us dumb
It is by means of Gascon aid.

Thus would I the great binders blend
In harmony with work before 'em,
And so Riviere I would commend
To Turner's "Liber Fluviorum."

After all, whether one can afford a three-hundred or a three-dollar binding, the gentle Elia has said the last word about fitness of bindings when he observed: "To be strong-backed and neat-bound is the desideratum of a volume; magnificence comes after. This, when it can be afforded, is not to be lavished on all kinds of books indiscriminately ❧

"Where we know that a book is at once both good and rare—where the individual is almost the species,

**The
Book-
Worm**

‘ We know not where is that Prometian torch
That can its light relumine ; ’

“ Such a book for instance as the ‘ Life of the Duke of Newcastle ’ by his Duchess—no casket is rich enough, no casing sufficiently durable, to honor and keep safe such a jewel ☉

“ To view a well arranged assortment of block-headed encyclopædias (Anglicana or Metropolitanas), set out in an array of Russia and Morocco, when a tithe of that good leather would comfortably reclothe my shivering folios, would renovate Parcelsus himself, and enable old Raymond Lully to look like himself again in the world. I never see these impostors but I long to strip them and warm my ragged veterans in their spoils.”



HERE spoke the true Book-Worm. What a pity he could not have sold a part of his good sense and fine taste to some of the affluent collectors of this period !

Doubtless an experienced binder could give some amusing examples of mistakes in indorsing books with their names. One remains in my memory. A French binder, entrusted with a French translation of “ Uncle Tom’s Cabin,” in two volumes, put “ L’ Oncle ” on both, and numbered them “ Tome 1,” “ Tome 2.” Charles Cowden-Clarke tells of his having ordered Leigh Hunt’s poems entitled “ Foliage ” to be bound in green, and how the book came home in blue. That would answer for the “ blue

grass " region of Kentucky. I have no patience with those disgusting realists who bind books in human or snake skin. In his charming book on the Law Reporters, Mr. Wallace says of Desaussures' South Carolina Reports: "When these volumes are found in their original binding most persons, I think, are struck with its peculiarity. The cause of it is, I believe, that it was done by negroes." What the "peculiarity" is he does not disclose. But book-binding seems to be an unwonted occupation for negro slaves. It was not often that they beat skins, although their own skins were frequently beaten.



VI.
PAPER.

IT IS a serious question whether the art of printing has been improved except in facility. Is not the first printed book still the finest ever printed? But in one point I am certain that the moderns have fallen away, at least in the production of cheap books, and that is in the quality and finish of the paper. Not to speak of injurious devices to make the book heavy, the custom of calendering the paper, or making it smooth and shiny, practised by some important publishers, is bad for the eyes, and the result is not pleasant to look at. It is like the glare of the glass over the framed print. It is said to be necessary to the production of the modern "process" pictures. Even here however there is a just mean, for some of the modern paper is absurdly rough, and very difficult for a good impression of the types. Modern paper however has one advantage: Mr. Blades, in his pleasant "Enemies of Books," tells us "that the worm will not touch it," it is so adulterated. One hint I would give the publishers—allow us a few more fly leaves, so that we may paste in newspaper cuttings, and make memoranda and suggestions 🐛

It is predicted by some that our nineteenth century books—at least those of the last third—will not last; that the paper and ink are far inferior to those of preceding centuries, and that the destroying tooth of

time will work havoc with them. No doubt the modern paper and the modern ink are inferior to those of the earlier ages of printing, when making a book was a fine art and a work of conscience, but whether the modern productions of the press will ultimately fade and crumble is a question to be determined only by a considerable lapse of time, which probably no one living will be qualified to pronounce upon. Take for what they are worth my sentiments respecting

THE FAILING BOOKS.

They say our books will disappear,
That ink will fade and paper rot—
I sha'n't be here,
So I don't care a jot.

The best of them I know by heart,
As for the rest they make me tired ;
The viler part
May well be fired.

Oh, what a hypocritic show
Will be the bibliomaniac's hoard !
Cheat as hollow
As a backgammon board.

Just think of Lamb without his stuffing,
And the iconoclastic Howells,
Who spite of puffing
Is destitute of bowels.

'Twould make me laugh to see the stare
Of mousing bibliomaniac fond
At pages bare
As Overreach's bond.

Those empty titles will displease
The earnest student seeking knowledge,—
Barren degrees,
Like these of Western College.

That common stuff, "Excelsior,"
In poetry so lacking,
I care not for—
'Tis only fit for packing.

It has occurred to me that publishers might appeal to bibliomaniacal tastes by paying a little more attention to their paper, and I have thrown a few suggestions on this point into rhyme, so that they may be readily committed to memory :

SUITING PAPER TO SUBJECT.

Printers the paper should adapt
Unto the subject of the book,
Thus making buyers wonder-rapt
Before they at the contents look.

Thus Beerbohm's learned book on Eggs
On a laid paper he should print,
But Motley's "Dutch Republic" begs
Rice paper should its matter hint.

That curious problem of what Man
Inhabited the Iron Mask
Than Whatman paper never can
A more suggestive medium ask.

*The
Books
Worm*

The "Book of Dates," by Mr. Haydon,
Should be on paper calendered;
That Swift on Servants be arrayed on
A hand-made paper is inferred.

Though angling-books have never been
Accustomed widely to appear
On fly-paper, 't would be no sin
To have them wormed from front to rear.

The good that authors thus may reap
I'll not pursue to tedium,
But hint, for books on raising sheep
Buckram is just the medium.

VII.

WOMEN AS COLLECTORS.



WOMEN collect all sorts of things except books. To them the book-sense seems to be denied, and it is difficult for them to appreciate its existence in men. To be sure, there have been a few celebrated book-collectors among the fair sex, but they have usually been rather reprehensible ladies, like Diane de Poitiers and Madame Pompadour. Probably Aspasia was a collector of MSS. Lady Jane Grey seems to have been a virtuous exception, and she was cruelly "cropped." I am told that there are a few women now-a-days who collect books, and only a few weeks ago a lady read, before a woman's club in Chicago, a paper on the Collection and Adornment of Books, for which occasion a fair member of the club solicited me to write her something appropriate to read, which of course I was glad to do. But this was in Chicago, where the women go in for culture. In thirty years' haunting of the book-shops and print-shops of New York, I have never seen a woman catching a cold in her head by turning over the large prints, nor soiling her dainty gloves by handling the dirty old books. Women have been depicted in literature in many different occupations, situations and pleasures, but in all the literature that I have

read I can recall only one instance in which she is imagined a book-buyer. This is in "The Sentimental Journey," and in celebrating the unique instance let me rise to a nobler strain and sing a song of

THE SENTIMENTAL CHAMBERMAID.



hen you're in Paris, do not fail

To seek the Quai de Conti,
Where in the roguish Parson's tale,
Upon the river front he
Bespoke the pretty chambermaid
Too innocent to be afraid.

On this book-seller's mouldy stall,
Crammed full of volumes musty,
I made a bibliophilic call

And saw, in garments rusty,
The ancient vender, queer to view,
In breeches, buckles, and a queue.

And while to find that famous book,
"Les Egaremens du Cœur,"

I dilligently undertook,

I suddenly met her ;

She held a small green satin purse,
And spite of Time looked none the worse.

I told her she was known to Fame

Through ministerial Mentor,

And though I had not heard her name,

That this should not prevent her
From listening to the homage due
To one to Sentiment so true.

She blushed; I bowed in courtly fashion;
In pockets of my trousers
Then sought a crown to vouch my passion,
Without intent to rouse hers;
But I had left my purse 'twould seem—
And then I woke—'twas but a dream!


The heart will wander, never doubt,
Though waking faith it keep;
That is exceptionally stout
Which strays but in its sleep;
And hearts must always turn to her
Who loved, "*Les Egaremens du Cœur.*"

M. Uzanne, in "*The Book-Hunter in Paris,*" avers that "the woman of fashion never goes book-hunting," and he puts the aphorism in italics. He also says that the occasional woman at the book-stalls, "if by chance she wants a book, tries to bargain for it as if it were a lobster or a fowl." Also that the book-stall keepers are always watchful of the woman with an ulster, a water-proof, or a muff. These garments are not always impervious to books, it seems.





HE imitative efforts of women at "extra-illustrating" are usually limited to buying a set of photographs at Rome and sticking them into the cracks of "The Marble Faun," and giving it away to a friend as a marked favor. Poor Hawthorne! he would wriggle in his grave if he could see his fair admirers doing this. Mr. Blades certainly ought to have included women among the enemies of books. They generally regard the husband's or father's expenditure on books as so much spoil of their gowns and jewels. We book-men are up to all the tricks of getting the books into the house without their knowing it. What joy and glee when we successfully smuggle in a parcel from the express, right under our wife's nose, while she is busy talking scandal to another woman in the drawing-room! The good creatures make us positively dishonest and endanger our eternal welfare. How we "hustle around" in their absence, when the embargo is temporarily raised; and when the new purchases are

detected, how we pretend that they are old, and wonder that they have not seen them before, and rattle away in a fevered, embarrassed manner about the scarcity and value of the surreptitious purchases, and how meanly conscious we are all the time that the pretense is unavailing and the fair despots see right through us. God has given them an instinct that is more than a match for our acknowledged superior intellect. And the good wife smiles quietly but satirically, and says, in the form in that case made and provided, "My dear, you'll certainly ruin yourself buying books!" with a sigh that agitates a very costly diamond necklace reposing on her shapely bosom; or she archly shakes at us a warning finger all aglow with ruby and sapphire, which she has bought on installments out of the house allowance. Fortunate for us if the library is not condemned to be cleaned twice a year. These beloved objects ought to deny themselves a ring, or a horse, or a gown, or a ball now and then, to atone for their mankind's debauchery in books; but do they? They ought to encourage the Bibliomania, for it keeps their husbands out of mischief, away from "that horrid club," and safe at home of evenings. The Book-Worm is always a blameless being. He never has to hie to Canada as a refuge. He is "absolutely pure," like all the baking powders 

The gentle Addison, in "The Spectator," thus described a woman's library: "The very sound of a lady's library gave me a great curiosity to see it; and

as it was some time before the lady came to me, I had an opportunity of turning over a great many of her books, which were ranged together in a very beautiful order. At the end of the folios (which were finely bound and gilt) were great jars of china placed one above another in a very noble piece of architecture. The quartos were separated from the octavos by a pile of smaller vessels, which rose in a delightful pyramid. The octavos were bounded by tea-dishes of all shapes, colors, and sizes, which were so disposed on a wooden frame that they looked like one continued pillar indented with the finest strokes of sculpture, and stained with the greatest variety of dyes. That part of the library which was designed for the reception of plays and pamphlets, and other loose papers, was inclosed in a kind of square, consisting of one of the prettiest grotesque works that I ever saw, and made up of scaramouches, lions, mandarins, monkeys, trees, shells, and a thousand other odd figures in china ware. In the midst of the room was a little Japan table with a quire of gilt paper upon it, and on the paper a silver snuff-box made in shape of a little book. I found there were several other counterfeit books upon the upper shelves, which were carved in wood, and served only to fill up the number, like fagots in the muster of a regiment. I was wonderfully pleased with such a mixed kind of furniture as seemed very suitable both to the lady and the scholar, and did not know at first whether I should fancy myself in a grotto or in a library "♣

If so great a favorite with the fair sex could say such
satirical things of them, I may be permitted to have
my own idea of

A WOMAN'S IDEA OF A LIBRARY.



do not care so much for books,
But Libraries are all the style,
With fine "editions de luxe"
One's formal callers to beguile ;

With neat dwarf cases round the walls,
And china teapots on the top,
The empty shelves concealed by falls
Of India silk that graceful drop.

A few rare etchings greet the view,
Like "Harmony" and "Harvest Moon ;"
An artist's proof on satin too
By what's-his-name is quite a boon.

My print called "Jupiter and Jo"
Is very rarely seen, but then
Another copy I can show
Inscribed with "Jupiter and io."

A fisher boy in marble stoops
On pedestal in window placed,
And one of Rogers' lovely groups
Is through the long lace curtains traced.

And then I make a painting lean
Upon a white and gilded easel,
Illustrating that famous scene

Of Joseph Andrews and Lady Teazle.
Of course my shelves the works reveal
Of Plutarch, Rollin, and of Tupper,
While Bowdler's Shakespeare and "Lucille"
Quite soothe one's spirits after supper.

And when I visited dear Rome
I bought a lot of photographs,
And had them mounted here at home,
And though my dreadful husband laughs,

I've put them in "The Marble Faun,"
And envious women vainly seek
At Scribner's shop, from early dawn,
To find a volume so unique.

And monthly here, in deep surmise,
Minerva's bust above us frowning,
A club of women analyze
The works of Ibsen and of Browning.

IN the charming romance, "Realmah," the noble African prince prescribes monogamy to his subjects, but he allows himself three wives; one is a State wife, to sit by his side on the throne, help him receive ambassadors, and preside at court dinners; another a household wife, to rule the kitchen and the homely affairs of the palace; the third is a love-wife, to be cherished in his heart and bear him children. Why would it not be fair to the Book-Worm to concede him a

**The
Book-
Worm**

Book-wife, who should understand and sympathize with him in his eccentricity, and who should care more for rare and beautiful books than for diamonds, laces, Easter bonnets and ten-button gloves? ♣

In regard to women's book-clubs, a recent writer, Mr. Edward Sanford Martin, in "Windfalls of Observation," observes: "If a man wants to read a book he buys it, and if he likes it he buys six more copies and gives (not all the same day, of course) to six women whose intelligence he respects. But if a club of fifteen girls determine to read a book, do they buy fifteen copies? No. Do they buy five copies? No. Do they buy—No, they don't buy at all; they borrow a copy. It doesn't lie in womankind to spend money for books unless they are meant to be a gift for some man." Mr. Martin is a little too hard here, for I have been told of such clubs which sometimes bought one copy. To be sure they always bully the bookseller into letting them have it at cost on account of the probable benefit to his trade. But it is true that no normally organized woman will forego a dollar's worth of ribbon or gloves for a dollar's worth of book ♣ I have sometimes read aloud to a number of women while they were sewing, but I do it no more, for just as I got to a point where you ought to be able to hear a pin drop, I always have heard some woman whisper, "Lend me your eighty cotton." A story was told me of the first meeting of a Browning Club in a large city in Ohio. My informant was a young lady from the East, who was present, and my readers can

safely rely on the correctness of the narration. The club was composed of young ladies from sixteen to twenty-five years of age, all of the "first families." It was thought best to take an easy poem for the first meeting, and so one of them read aloud, "The Last Ride Together" ❀ After the reading there was a moment's silence, and then one observed that she would like to know whether they took that ride on horseback or in a "buggy." Another silence, and then an artless young bud ventured the remark that she thought it must have been in a buggy, because if it was on horseback he could not have got his arm around her. I once thought of sending this anecdote to Mr. Browning, but was warned that he was destitute of the sense of humor, especially at his own expense, and so desisted ❀

"Ah, that our wives could only see
How well the money is invested
In these old books, which seem to be
By them, alas ! so much detested."

But the wives are not always unwise in their opposition to their husband's book-buying. There is nothing



more pitiful than to see the widow of a poor clergyman or lawyer trying to sell his library, and to witness her disappointment at the ❀ shrinkage of value which she had been taught and accustomed to regard as so

great. A woman who has a true and wise sympathy with her husband's book-buying is an adored object. I recollect one such, who at her own suggestion gave up the largest and best room in her house to her husband's books, and received her callers and guests in a smaller one—she also received her husband's blessing.



VIII.
THE ILLUSTRATOR.

*The
Book-
Worm*



THE popular notion of the Illustrator, as the term is used by the Book-Worm, is that he buys many valuable books containing pictures and spoils them by tearing the pictures out, and from them constructs another valuable book with pictures. We smile to read this in the newspapers. If it were strictly true it would be a very reprehensible practice. But generally the books compelled to surrender their prints to the Illustrator are good for nothing else. To lament over them is as foolish as to grieve over the grape-skins out of which has been pressed the luscious Johannisburger, or to mourn over the unsightly holes which the porcelain-potter has made in the clay-bank. Even among Book-Worms the Illustrator, or the "Grangerite," as the term of reproach is, has come in for many hard knocks in recent years. John Hill Burton set the tune by his merry satire in "The Book-Hunter," in which he portrays the Grangerite illustrating the pious Watts' stanzas, beginning, "How doth the little busy bee." In his first edition Mr. Burton mentioned among "great writers on bees," whose portrait would be desirable, Aristarchus, ☼ meaning probably Aristomachus. This mistake is not

corrected in the last edition, but the name is omitted altogether ☛


Mr. Beverly Chew "drops into poetry" on the subject, and thus apostrophises the Grangerite :


"Ah, ruthless wight,
Think of the books you've turned to waste,
With patient skill."





R. HENRI PERE DU BOIS thus describes the ordinary result: "Of one hundred books extended by the insertion of prints which were not made for them, ninety-nine are ruined ; ☛ the hundredth book is no longer a book ; it is a museum. An imperfect book, built with the spoils of a thousand books ; a crazy quilt made of patches out of gowns of queens and scullions." So Burton compares the Grangerite to Genghis Kahn. Mr. Lang declares the Grangerites are "book ghouls, and brood, like the obscene demons of Arabian superstition, over the fragments of the mighty dead." I would like to show Mr. Lang how I have treated his "Letters to Dead Authors" and "Old Friends" by illustration. He would probably feel, with Æsop's lawyer, that "circumstances alter cases," although he says "no book deserves the honor" ☛

So a reviewer in "The Nation" stigmatises Grangerism as "a vampire art, maiming when it does not murder" (I did not know that vampires "maim" their victims) "and incapable of rising beyond cani-

balism" (not that they feed on one another, but when critics get excited their metaphors are apt to become mixed) 

"G. W. S.," of the New York "Tribune," speaks of the achievement of the Illustrators as "colossal vulgarities." Mr. Percy Fitzgerald observes: "The pitiless Grangerite slaughters a book for a few pictures, just as an epicure has had a sheep killed for the sweetbread" 

HESE are very choice hard words. There is much extravagance, but some justice in all this criticism. As a question of economics I do not find any great difference between a Book-Worm who spends thousands of dollars in constructing one attractive book from several not attractive, and one who spends a thousand dollars in binding a book, or for an example of a famous old binder. If there is any difference it is in favor of the Grangerite, who improves the volume for the intelligent purposes of the reader, as against the other who merely caters to "the lust of the eye" 

I am willing to concede that the Grangerite is sometimes guilty of some gross offenses against good taste and good sense. The worst of these is when he extends the text of the volume itself to a larger page in order to embrace large prints. This is grotesque, for it spoils the very book. He is also blamable when he squanders valuable prints and time and patience on mere book lumber, such as long rows of histories; and when he stuffs and crams his book; and when

his pictures are not of the era of the events or of the time of life of the persons described ; and when they are too large or too small to be in just proportion to the printed page ; and when the book is so heavy and cumbersome that no one can handle it with comfort or convenience. Above all he is blamable, in my estimation, when he entrusts the selection of prints to an agent. Such agency is frequently very unsatisfactory, and at all events the Illustrator misses the sport of the hunt. Few men would entrust the furnishing or decorating of a house, the purchase of a horse, or the selection of a wife to a third person, and the delicate matter of choosing prints for a book is essentially one to be transacted in person. The danger of any other procedure in the case of a wife was illustrated by Cromwell's agency for Henry Eighth in the affair of Anne of Cleves, the " Flanders mare."

BUT when it is properly done, it seems to me that the very best thing the Book-Worm ever does is to illustrate his books, because this insures his reading them, at least with his fingers. Not always, for a certain chronicler of collections of privately illustrated books in this country narrates, how "relying upon the index" of a book, which he illustrated, he inserted a portrait of Sam Johnson, the famous, whereas "the text called for Sam Johnson, an eccentric dramatic writer," etc. His binder, he says, laughed at him for being ignorant that there "two Sam Johnsons" (there are four in the biographical dictionaries, one of whom was an

early president of King's College in New York). But if done personally and conscientiously it is a means of valuable culture. As one of the oldest survivors of the genus *Illustrator* in this country, I have thus assumed to offer an apology and defense for my much berated kind. And now let me make a few suggestions as to what seems to me the most suitable mode of the pursuit.




*The
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Worm*




IN ILLUSTRATING there seem to be two methods, which may be described as the literal or realistic, and imaginative. The first consists simply in the insertion of portraits, views and scenes appropriate to the text. A pleasing variety may be imparted to this method by substituting for a mere portrait a scene in the life of the celebrity in question. For example, if Charles V. and Titian are mentioned together, it would be interesting to insert a picture representing the historical incident of the emperor picking up and handing the artist a brush which he had dropped—and one will have an interesting hunt to find it. But I am more an adherent of the romantic school, which finds excellent play in the illustration of poetry. For example, in the poem, "Ennui," in "The Croakers," for the line, "The fiend, the fiend is on me still," I found, after a search of some years, a picture of an imp sitting on the breast of a man in bed with the gout. In the same stanza are the lines, "Like a cruel cat, that sucks a child to death," and for this I have a print from a children's magazine, of a cat squatting on the breast of a child in a cradle. Now I would like "a Madagascar bat," which rhymes to "cat"

in the poem. "And like a tom-cat dies by inches," is illustrated by a picture of a cat caught by the paw in a steel trap. "Simon" was "a gentleman of color," the favorite pastry cook and caterer of New York half a century ago—before the days of Mr. Ward McAllister. "The Croaker" advises him to "buy an eye-glass and become a dandy and a gentleman." This is illustrated by a rare and fine print of a colored gentleman, dressed in breeches, silk stockings, and ruffled shirt, scanning an overdressed lady of African descent through an eye-glass. "The ups and downs of politics" is illustrated by a Cruikshank print, the upper part of which shows a party making an ascension in a balloon and the lower part a party making a descent in a diving-bell, and entitled "the ups and downs of life." To illustrate the phrase, "seeing the elephant," take the print of Pyrrhus trying to frighten his captive, Fabricus, by suddenly drawing the curtains of his tent and showing him an elephant with his trunk raised in a baggage-smashing attitude. For "The Croakers" there are apt illustrations also of the following queer subjects: Korah, Dathan and Abiram; Miss Atropos, shut up your Scissors; Albany's two Steeples high in Air, Reading Cobbett's Register, Bony in His Prison Isle, Giant Wife, Beauty and The Beast, Fly Market, Tammany Hall, The Dove from Noah's Ark, Rome Saved by Geese, Cæsar Offered a Crown, Cæsar Crossing the Rubicon, Dick Ricker's Bust, Sancho in His Island Reigning, The Wisest of Wild Fowl, Reynold's Beer House, A

Mummy, A Chimney Sweep, The Arab's Wind, Pygmalion, Danae, Highland Chieftain with His Tail On, Nightmare, Shaking Quakers, Polony's Crazy Daughter, Bubble-Blowing, First Pair of Breeches, Banquo's Ghost, Press Gang, Fair Lady With the Bandaged Eye, A Warrior Leaning on His Sword, A Warrior's Tomb, A Duel, and A Street Flirtation.

S THE charm of illustrating consists in the hunt for the prints, so the latter method is the more engrossing because the game is the more difficult to run down. Portraits, views and scenes are plenty, but to find them properly adaptable is frequently difficult. Some things which one would suppose readily procurable are really hard to find. For example, it was a weary chase to get a treadmill, and so of a drum-major, although the latter is now not uncommon: and although I know it exists, I have not attained unto a bastinado. Sirens and mermaids are rather retiring, and when Vedder depicted the Sea-Serpent he conferred a boon on Illustrators. "God's Scales," in which the mendicant weighs down the rich man, is a rarity. Milton leaving his card on Galileo in prison is among my wants, although I have seen it. As to scarce portraits, let me sing a song of

THE SHY PORTRAITS.

h, why do you elude me so—
Ye portraits that so long I've sought?
That somewhere ye exist, I know—

Indifferent, good, and good for naught.

Lucrezia, of the poisoned cup,

Why do you shrink away by stealth?
To view your "mug" with you I'd sup,
And even dare to drink your health.

Oh! why so coy, Godiva fair?

You're covered by your shining tresses,
And I would promise not to stare
At sheerest of go-diving dresses.

Come out, old Bluebeard; don't be shy!

You're not so bad as Froude's great hero;
Xantippe, fear no law gone by
When scolds were ducked in ponds at zero.

Not mealy-mouthed was Mrs. Behn,

And prudish was satiric Jane,
But equally they both shun men,
As if they bore the mark of Cain.

George Barrington, you may return

To country which you "left for good;"
Psalmanazar, I would not spurn
Your language when 't was understood.

Jean Grolier, you left many books—

They come so dear I must ignore 'em—
But there's no evidence of your looks
For us surviving "amicorum."

This country 's overrun by grangers—



The
Book-
Worm

I'm ignorant of their christian names
But my afflicted eyes are strangers
To one I want whom men call James.


There's Heber, man of many books—
You're far more modest than the Bishop;
I'm curious to learn your looks,
And care for nothing shown at his shop.

And oh! that wondrous, pattern child!
His truthfulness, no one can match it;
Dear little George! I'm almost wild
To find a wood-cut of his hatchet.

Show forth your face, Anonymous,
Whose name is in the books I con
Most frequently; so famous thus,
Will you not come to me anon?

Y way of jest I have inserted an anonymous
portrait opposite an anonymous poem, and
was once gravely asked by an absent-minded
friend if it really was the portrait of the au-
thor. One however will probably look in vain for por-
traits of "Quatorze" and "Quinze," for which a print
seller of New York once had an inquiry, and I have
been told of a collector who returned Arlington be-
cause of the cut on his nose, and Ogle because of his
damaged eye. But there is more sport in hunting for
a dodo than a rabbit 

It is also a pleasant thing to lay a picture occasion-
ally in a book without setting out to illustrate it reg-



ularly, so that it may break upon one as a surprise when he takes up the book years afterward. It is a grateful surprise to find in Ruskin's "Modern Painters" a casual print from Roger's "Italy," and in Hamerton's books some sporadic etchings by Rembrandt or Hayden. It is like discovering an unexpected "quarter" in the pocket of an old waistcoat. For example, in "With Thackeray in America," Mr. Eyre Crowe tells how the second number of the first edition of "The Newcomes" came to the author when he was in Paris, and how he found fault with Doyle's illustration of the games of the Charterhouse boys. He says: "The peccant accessory which roused the wrath of the writer was the group of two boys playing at marbles on the left of the spectator. 'Why,' said the irate author, 'they would as soon thought of cutting off their heads as play marbles at the Charterhouse!' This woodcut was, I noticed, suppressed altogether in subsequent editions." Now in my copy—not being the possessor of the first edition—I have made a reference to Mr. Crowe's passage, and supplied the suppressed cut from an early American copy which cost me twenty-five cents. How many of the first edition men know of the interesting fact narrated by Mr. Crowe? The Illustrator ought always at least to insert the portrait of the author whenever it has been omitted by the publisher 


Second: What to illustrate. The Illustrator should not be an imitator or follower, but should strive after an unhackneyed subject. A man is not apt to marry

the woman who flings herself at his head ; he loves the excitement of courting ; and so there is not much amusement in utilizing common pictures, but the charm consists in hunting for scarce ones. It is very natural to tread in others' tracks, and easy, because the market affords plenty of material for the common subjects. Shakespeare and Walton and Boswell's Johnson, and a few other things of that sort, have been done to death, and there is fairer scope in something else. Biographies of Painters, Elia's Essays, Sir Thomas Browne's "Religio Medici" and "Urn Burial," "Childe Harold," Horace, Virgil, the Life of Bayard, or of Vittoria Colonna, or Philip Sidney, and Sappho are charming subjects, and not too common. A ponderous or voluminous work lends itself less conveniently to the purpose than a small book in one or two volumes. Great quartos and folios are mere mausoleums or repositories for expensive prints, too huge to handle, and too extensive for any one ever to look through, and therefore they afford little pleasure to the owners or their guests. An illustrated Shakespeare in thirty volumes is theoretically a very grand object, but I should never have the heart to open it, and as for histories, I should as soon think of illustrating a dictionary. Walton is a lovely subject, but I would adopt a small copy and keep it within two or three volumes. After all there is nothing so charming as a single little illustrated volume, like "Ballads of Books," compiled by Brander Matthews ; Andrew Lang's "Letters to

Dead Authors," or "Old Friends," Friswell's "Varia," the "Book of Death," "Melodies and Madrigals," "The Book of Rubies," Winter's "Shakespeare's England."

The
Book-
Worm

 GENTLEMAN who published, a good many years ago, a monograph of privately illustrated books in this country, spoke of the work that I had done in this field, and criticised me for my "apparent want of method," "eccentricity," "madness," "vagaries," "omnivorousness," and "lack of speciality or system," and finally, although he blamed me for having illustrated pretty much everything, he also blamed me for not having illustrated any "biographical works." This criticism seems not only inconsistent, but without basis, for one man may not dictate to another what he shall prefer to illustrate for his own amusement, any more than what sort of a house or pictures he shall buy or what complexion or stature his wife shall have. The author also did me the honor to spell my name wrong, and did the famous Greek amatory poet the honor of mentioning among my illustrated work, "Odes to Anacreon." Would that I could find that book! 

I offer these suggestions with diffidence, and with no intention to impose my taste upon others 

If the Illustrator can get or make something absolutely unique he is a fortunate man. For example, I know one, stigmatized as eccentric, who has illustrated a printed catalogue of his own library with


portraits of the authors, copies of prints in the books, and duplicates of engraved title-pages ; also one who has illustrated a collection in print or in manuscript of his own poems ; also one who has illustrated a Life of Hercules, written by himself, printed by one of his own family, and adorned with prints from antique gems and other subjects ; and even a lawyer who has illustrated a law book written by himself, in which he has found place for prints so diverse and apparently out of keeping as Jonah and the whale, John Brown, a man pacing the floor in a nightgown with a crying baby, a "darkey" shot in a melon-patch, an elephant on the rampage, Cupid, Hudibras writing a letter, Joanna Southcote, Launce and his dog, a dog catching a boy going over a wall, Dr. Watts, Robinson Crusoe, Barnum in the form of a hum-bug, Jacob Hall the rope dancer, Lord Mayor's procession, Raphael discoursing to Adam, gathering sea-weed, Artemus Ward, a whale ashore, a barber-shop, Gilpin's ride, King Lear, St. Lawrence on his gridiron, Charles Lamb, Terpsichore, and a child tumbling into a well. The owner of such a book may be sure that it is unique, as the man was certain his coat of arms was genuine, because he made it himself.

Third: the Illustrator should not be in a hurry.



HERE are three singular things about the hunt for pictures. One is, the moment you have your book bound, no matter how many years you may have waited, some rare picture you wanted is sure to turn up. Hence

the reluctance of the Illustrator to commit himself to binding, a reluctance only paralleled by that of the lover to marry the woman he had courted for ten years, because then he would have no place to spend his evenings. (I have had books "in hand" for twenty years).

ANOTHER is, when you have found your rare picture you are pretty certain to find one or two duplicates. Prints, like accidents or crimes, seem to come in cycles and schools. I have known a man to search in vain in thirty print-shops in London, and coming home find what he wanted in a New York print-shop, and two copies at that. The third is, that you are continually coming very near the object without quite attaining it. Thus one may get Lady Godiva alone, and the effigy of Peeping Tom on the corner of an old house at Coventry, but to procure the whole scene is, so far as I know, out of the question. It would seem that Mr. Anthony Comstock has put his ban on it. So one will find it difficult to get "God's scales," in which wealth and poverty are weighed against each other, but I have had other scales thrust at me, such as those in which the emblems of love are weighed against those of religion, and a king against a beggar, but even the latter is not the precise thing, for in these days there are poor kings and rich beggars  One opinion in which all illustrators agree seems sound, and that is, that photographs are not to be tolerated. Photography is the most misrepresenta-

tive of arts. But an exception may be indulged in the case of those few celebrities who are too modest to allow themselves to be engraved, and of whom photography furnishes the only portraiture. A photographic copy of a rare portrait in oil is also admissible. Some also exclude wood-cuts. I am not such a purist as that. They are frequently the only means of illustrating a subject, and small and fine wood-cuts form charming head and tail pieces and marginal adornments. One who eschews wood-cuts must forego such interesting little subjects as Washington and his little hatchet, God's scales, the skeleton in the closet, and many of those which I have particularized. I flatter myself that I have made the margins of a good many books very interesting by means of small wood-cuts, of which our modern magazines provide an abundant and exquisite supply. These furnish a copious source of specific illustration.








WITH their zeal illustrators are sometimes apt to be anachronistic. Every book ought to be illustrated in the spirit and costume of its time. The book should not be stuffed too full of prints; let a better proportion be preserved between the text and the illustrations than Falstaff observed between his bread and his sack. The prints should not be so numerous as to cause the text to be forgotten, as in the case of a tedious sermon.


Probably nearly every collector expects that his treasures will be dispersed at his death, if not sooner. But it is a serious question to the illustrator, what will become of these precious objects upon which he has spent so much time, thought and labor, and for which he has expended so much money. He never cares and rarely knows, and if he knows he never tells, how much they have cost, but he may always be certain that they will never fetch their cost. Let us not indulge in any false dreams on this subject. The time may have

been when prints were cheap and when the illustrator may have been able to make himself whole or even reap a profit, but that day I believe has gone by ♣ One can hardly expect that his family will care for these things; the son generally thinks the Book-Worm a bore, and the wife of one's bosom and the daughter of one's heart usually affect more interest than they feel, and if they kept such objects would do so from a sense of duty alone, as the ancient Romans preserved the cinerary urns of their ancestors. For myself, I have often imagined my grandson listlessly turning over one of my favorite illustrated volumes, and saying, "What a funny old duffer grandad must have been!" Such a book-club, as the "Grolier," of New York, is a fortunate avenue of escape from these evils. There one might deposit at least some of his peculiar treasures, certain that they would receive good care, be regarded with permanent interest, and keep alive his memory.


O AUGMENT his books by inserting prints is ordinarily just the one thing which the Book-Worm can do to render them in a deeper sense his own, and to gain for himself a peculiar proprietorship in them. Generally he cannot himself bind them, but by this means he may render himself a coadjutor of the author, and place himself on equal terms with the printer and the binder 

After he has illustrated a favorite book once, it is an enjoyable occupation for the Book-Worm to do it over

again, in a different spirit and with different pictures. "Second thoughts are best," it has been said, and I have more than once improved my subject by a second treatment 

There is another form of illustration, of which I have not spoken, and that is the insertion of clippings from magazines and newspapers in the fly leaves. Sometimes these are of intense interest. My own Dickens, Thackeray and Hawthorne, in particular have their porticoes and posters plentifully supplied with material of this sort  The latest contribution of this kind is to "Martin Chuzzlewit," and consists in the information that a western American "land-shark"

has recently swindled people by selling them swamp-lots, attractively depicted on a map

and named Eden  In my Pepys I have

laid Mr. Lang's recent letter to the

diarist. So on a fly leaf of Haw-

thorne's Life it is pleasing

to see a cut of his little

red house at Lenox,

now destroy-

ed by fire.



IX.
BOOK-PLATES.



RATHER modern form of book-spoliation has arisen in the collection of book-plates. These are literally derived "ex libris," and the business cannot be indulged, as a general thing, without in some sense despoiling books. It cannot be denied that it is a fascinating pursuit. So undoubtedly is the taking of watches or rings or other "articles of bigotry or virtue," on the highway ♣ But somehow there is something so essentially personal in a book-plate, that it is hard to understand why other persons than the owners should become possessed by a passion for it. Many years ago when Burton, the great comedian, was in his prime, he used to act in a farce called "Toodles"—at all events, that was his name in the play—and he was afflicted with a wife who had a mania for attending auctions and buying all kinds of things, useful or useless, provided that they only seemed cheap. One day she came home with a door-plate, inscribed, "Thompson"—"Thompson with a p," as Toodles wrathfully described it; and this was more than Toodles could stand. He could not see what possible use there could ever be in that door-plate for the Toodles family. In those same days, there used to be

displayed on the door of a modest house, on the east side of Broadway, in the city of New York, somewhere about Eighth Street, a silver door-plate inscribed, "Mr. Astor." This appertained to the original John Jacob ☘ In those days I frequently remarked it, and thought what a prize it would be to Mrs. Toodles or some collector of door-plates. Now I can understand why one might acquire a taste for collecting book-plates of distinguished men or famous book-collectors, just as one collects autographs; but why collect hundreds and thousands of book-plates of undistinguished and even unknown persons, frequently consisting of nothing more than family coats-of-arms, or mere family names? I must confess that I share to a certain extent in Mr. Lang's antipathy to this species of collecting, and am disposed to call down on these collectors Shakespeare's curse on him who should move his bones. But I cannot go with Mr. Lang when he calls these well-meaning and by no means mischevius persons some hard names.

IN SOME localities it is quite the vogue to take off the coffin-plate from the coffin—all the other silver "trimmings," too, for that matter—and preserve it, and even have it framed and hung up in the home of the late lamented. There may be a sense of proprietorship in the mourners, who have bought and paid for it, and see no good reason for burying it, that will justify this practice. At all events it is a family matter. The coffin plate reminds the desolate survivors of the person desig-

nated, who is shelved forever in the dust. But what would be said of the sense or sanity of one who should go about collecting and framing coffin-plates, cataloguing them, and even exchanging them?

BOOK-WORMS penetrate to different distances in books. Some go no further than the title page; others dig into the preface or bore into the table of contents; a few begin excavations at the close, to see "how it comes out." But that Worm is most easily satisfied who never goes beyond the inside of the front cover, and passes his time in prying off the book-plates 🌿

I think I have heard of persons who collect colophons. These go to work in the reverse direction, and are even more reprehensible than the accumulators of book-plates, because they inevitably ruin the book 🌿

A book-plate is appropriate, sometimes ornamental, even beautiful, in its intended place in the proprietor's book. Out of that, with rare exceptions, it strikes one like the coffin-plate, framed and hanging on the wall 🍀 It gives additional value and attractiveness to a book which one buys, but it ought to remain there 🌿

If one purchases books once owned by A, B and C—undistinguished persons, or even distinguished—containing their autographs, he does not cut them out to form a collection of autographs 🍀 If the name is not celebrated, the autograph has no interest or value; if famous, it has still greater interest and value by

remaining in the book. So it seems to me it should be in respect to book-plates ♣ Let Mr. Astor's door-plate stay on his front door, and let the energetic Mrs. Toodles content herself in buying something less individual and more adaptable.

*The
Book-
Worm*



BOOK-PLATE really is of no value except to the owner, as the man says of papers which he has lost. It cannot be utilized to mark the possessions of another. In this respect it is of inferior value to the door-plate, for possibly another Mr. Astor might arise, to whom the original door-plate might be sold. A Boston newspaper tells of a peddler of door-plates who contracted to sell a Salem widow a door-plate; and when she gave him her name to be engraved on it, gave only her surname, objecting to any first name or initials, observing: "I might get married again, and if my initials or first name were on the plate, it would be of no use. If they are left off, the plate could be used by my son." ❀

Thus much about collecting book-plates. One word may be tolerated about the character of one's own book-plate. To my taste, mere coats-of-arms with mottoes are not the best form. ♣ They simply denote ownership. They might well answer some further purpose, as for example to typify the peculiar tastes of the proprietor in respect to his books. A portrait of the owner is not objectionable, indeed is quite welcome in connection with some device or motto

pertaining to books and not to mere family descent. But why, although a collector may have a favorite author, like Hawthorne or Thackeray, for example, should he insert his portrait in his book-plate, as is often done? Mr. Howells would writhe in his grave if he knew that somebody had stuck Thackeray's portrait or Scott's in "Silas Lapham," and those Calvinists who think that the "Scarlet Letter" is wicked, would pronounce damnation on the man who should put the gentle Hawthorne's portrait in a religious book. ♣ To be sure, one might have a variety of book-plates, with portraits appropriate to different kinds of books—Napoleon's for military, Calvin for religious, Walton's for angling and a composite portrait of Howells-James for fiction of the photographic school; but this would involve expense and destroy the intrinsic unity desirable in the book-plate. So let the portrait, if any, be either that of the proprietor or a conventional image. If I were to relax and allow a single exception it would be in favor of dear Charles Lamb's portrait in "Fraser's," representing him as reading a book by candle light. (For the moment this idea pleases me so much that I feel half inclined to eat all my foregoing words on this point, and adopt it for myself. At any rate, I hereby pre-empt the privilege.)



HAVE referred to Mr. Lang's antipathy to book-plate collectors, and while, as I have observed, he goes to extravagant lengths in condemning their pursuit, still it may be of

interest to my readers to know just what he says about them, and so I reproduce below a ballad on the subject, with (the material for) which he kindly supplied me when I solicited his mild expression of opinion on the subject :

*The
Book:
Worm*

THE SNATCHERS.

THE Romans snatched the Sabine wives ;
The crime had some extenuation,
For they were leading lonely lives
And driven to reckless desperation.

Lord Elgin stripped the Grecian frieze
Of all its marbles celebrated,
So our art-students now with ease
Consult the figures overrated.

Napoleon stole the southern pictures
And hung them up to grace the Louvre ;
And though he could not make them fixtures,
They answered as an art-improver.

Bold men ransack an Egyptian tomb,
And with the mummies there make free ;
Such intermeddling with Time's womb
May aid in archeology.

So Cruncher dug up graves in haste,
To sell the corpses to the doctors ;
This trade was not against his taste,
Though Misses "flopped," and vowed it
shocked hers.

The modern snatcher sponges leaves
And boards of books to crib their labels ;
Most petty, trivial of thieves,
Surpassing all we read in fables.

He pastes them in a big, blank book
To show them to some rival fool,
And I pronounce him, when I look,
An almost-idiotic ghoul.



X.

THE BOOK-AUCTIONEER.

The
Book-
Worm



HERE is one figure that stands in a very unpleasant relation to books 🌿

If anybody has any curiosity to know what I consider the most undesirable occupation of mankind, I will answer candidly—that of an auctioneer of private libraries. It does not

seem to have fallen into disrepute like that of the headsman or hangman, and perhaps it is as unpleasantly essential as that of the undertaker. But it generally thrives on the unhappiness of those who are compelled to part with their books, on the rivalries of the rich, and the strifes of the trade ♣ It was urged against Mr. Cleveland, on his first canvass for the Presidency, that when he was sheriff he had hanged a murderer. For my own part, I admired him for performing that solemn office himself rather than hiring an underling to do it. But if he had been a book-auctioneer, I might have been prejudiced against him 🌿

Not so ignoble and inhuman perhaps as that of the slave-seller, still the business must breed a sort of callousness which is abhorrent to the genial Book-Worm. How I hate the glib rattle of his tongue, the mouldiness of his jests and the transparency of his

puffery! I should think he would hate himself. It must be worse than acting Hamlet or Humpty Dumpty a hundred consecutive nights ♣ Dante had no punishment for the Book-Worm in hell, if I remember right, but if he deserved any pitiless reprobation, it would be found in compelling him to cry off books to all eternity ♣ Grant that the auctioneer is a person of sensibility and acquainted with good books, then his calling must give him many a pang as he observes the ignorance and carelessness of his audience. It is better and more fitting that he should know little of his wares. He ought to be well paid for his work, and he is—no man gets so much for mere talk except the lawyer, and perhaps not even he. I do not so much complain of his favoritism. When there is something especially desirable going, I frequently fail to catch his eye, and my rival gets the prize 🖐 But in this he is no worse than the Speaker. On the other hand he sometimes loads me up with a thing that I do not want, and in possession of which I would be unwilling to be found dead, pretending that I winked at him—a species of imposition which it is impolitic to resent for fear of being entirely ignored. These discretionary favors are regarded as a practical joke and must not be declined ♣ But what I do complain of is his commercial stolidity, surpassing that of Charles Surface when he sold the portraits of his ancestors. The “bete noir” of the book trade is 🖐

THE STOLID AUCTIONEER.

The
Book:
Worm

NET not a sad ghost
From the scribbling host
Revisit this workaday sphere ;
He'll find in the sequel
All talents are equal
When they come to the auctioneer.

Not a whit cares he
What the book may be,
Whether missal with glorious show,
A folio Shakespear,
Or an Elzevir,
Or a Tupper, or E. P. Roe.

Without any qualms
He knocks down the Psalms,
Or the chaste Imitatio,
And takes the same pains
To enhance his gains
With a ribald Boccaccio.

He rattles them off,
Not stopping to cough,
He shows no distinction of person ;
One minute's enough
For similar stuff
Like Shelley and Ossian Macpherson.

A Paradise Lost
Is had for less cost
Than a bulky "fifteener" in Greek,

And Addison's prose
Quite frequently goes
For a tenth of a worthless "unique."

This formula stale
Of his will avail
For an epitaph meet for his rank,
When dropping his gavel
He falls in the gravel,
"Do I hear nothing more?—gone—to—?"

I speak feelingly, but I think it is pardonable. I once went through an auction sale of my own books, and while I lost money on volumes on which I had bestowed much thought, labor and expense, I made a profit on Gibbon's "Decline and Fall" in tree-calf.

I do not complain of the loss; what I was mortified by was the profit. But the auctioneer was not at all abashed; in fact he seemed rather pleased, and apparently regarded it as a feather in his cap. I have always suspected that the shameless purchaser was Silas Wegg.



XI.

THE BOOKSELLER.

The
Book-
Worm



CONSIDERING his importance in modern civilization, it is singular that so little has been recorded of the Bookseller in literature. Shakespeare has a great deal to say of books of various kinds, but not a word, I believe, of the Bookseller. It is true that Ursa Major gave a mitigated growl of applause to the booksellers, if I recollect my Boswell right, and he condescended to write a life of Cave, but bookseller in his view meant publisher. It is true that Charles Knight wrote a book entitled "Shadows of the Old Booksellers," but here too the characters were mainly publishers, and his account of them is indeed shadowy. The chief thing that I recall about any of the booksellers thus celebrated is that Tom Davies had "a pretty wife," which is probably the reason why Doctor Johnson thought Tom would better have stuck to the stage. So far as I know, the most vivid pen-pictures of booksellers are those depicting the humble members of the craft, the curb-stone venders. They are much more picturesque than their more affluent brethren who are used to the luxury of a roof.

Rummaging over the contents of an old stall, at a half book, half old iron shop in Ninety-four alley,



MONSIEUR UZANNE, who has treated of the elegancies of the Fan, the Muff, and the Umbrella, has more recently given the world a quite unique series of studies among the bookstalls and the quays of Paris—"The Book Hunter in Paris"—and this too one finds more entertaining than any account of Quaritch's or Putnam's shop would be.

I must bear witness to the honesty and liberality of booksellers. When one considers the hundreds of catalogues from which he has ordered books at a venture, even from across the ocean, and how seldom he has been misled or disappointed in the re-leading from Wardour street to Soho, yesterday, I lit upon a ragged duodecimo, which has been the strange delight of my infancy; the price demanded was sixpence, which the owner (a little squab duodecimo of a character himself) enforced with the assurance that his own mother should not have it for a farthing less. On my demurring to this extraordinary assertion, the dirty little vender reinforced his assertion with a sort of oath, which seemed more than the occasion demanded. "And now," said he, "I have put my soul to it." Pressed by so solemn an asseveration, I could no longer resist a demand which seemed to set me, however unworthy, upon a level with his nearest relations; and depositing a tester, I bore away the battered prize in triumph.

—Essays of Elia.

sult, one cannot subscribe to a belief in the dogma of total depravity. I remember some of my booksellers with positive affection. They were such self-denying men to consent to part with their treasures at any price ♣ And as a rule they are far more careless than ordinary merchants about getting or securing their pay ♣ To be sure it is rather ignoble for the painter of a picture, or the chiseller of a statue, or the vender of a fine book, to affect the acuteness of tradesmen in the matter of compensation. The excellent bookseller takes it for granted, if he stoops to think about it, that if a man orders a Caxton or a Grolier he will pay for it, at his convenience. It was this unthinking liberality which led a New York bookseller to give credit to a distinguished person—afterwards a candidate for the Presidency—to a considerable amount, and to let the account stand until it was outlawed, and his sensibilities were grievously shocked, when being compelled to sue for his due, his debtor pleaded the statute of limitations! His faith was not restored even when the acute buyer left a great sum of money by his will to found a public library, and the legacy failed through informality.

I HAVE only one complaint to make against booksellers. They should teach their clerks to recognize The Book-Worm at a glance ♣ It is very annoying, when I go browsing around a book-shop, to have an attendant come up and ask me, who have bought books for thirty years, if he can “show me anything”—just as if I

wanted to see anything in particular—or if “anybody is waiting on me”—when all I desire is to be let alone. Some booksellers, I am convinced, have this art of recognition, for they let me alone, and I make it a rule always to buy something of them, but never when their employees are so annoyingly attentive. I do not object to being watched; it is only the implication that I need any assistance that offends me. It is easy to recognize the Book-Worm at a glance by the care with which he handles the rare books and the indifference with which he passes the standard authors in holiday bindings.



NCE I had a bookseller who had a talent for drawing, which he used to exercise occasionally on the exterior of an express package of books. One of these wrappings I have preserved, exhibiting a pen-and-ink drawing of a war-ship firing a big gun at a few small birds. Perhaps this was satirically intended to denote the pains and time he had expended on so small a sale. But I will now immortalize him. The most striking picture of a bookseller that I recall in all literature is one drawn by M. Uzanne, in the charming book mentioned above, which I will endeavor to transmute and transmit under the title of

THE PROPHETIC BOOK.

LA CROIX,” said the Emperor, “cease to beguile;

These bookstalls must go from my bridges and quays;

No longer shall tradesmen my city defile
With mouldering hideous scarecrows like these."


*The
Book-
Worm*

While walking that night with the bibliophile,
On the Quai Malaquais by the Rue de Saints Peres,
The Emperor saw, with satirical smile,
Enkindling his stove, in the chill evening air,

With leaves which he tore from a tome by his side,
A bookseller ancient, with tremulous hands ;
And laying aside his imperial pride,
"What book are you burning?" the Emperor de-
mands.

For answer Pere Foy handed over the book,
And there as the headlines saluted his glance,
Napoleon read, with a stupefied look,
"Account of the Conquests and Victories of
France."

The dreamer imperial swallowed his ire ;
Pere Foy still remained at his musty old stand,
Till France was environed by sword and by fire,
And Germans like locusts devoured the land.

OUBTLESS the occupation of bookseller
is generally regarded as a very pleasant as
well as a refined one. But there is another
side, in the estimation of a true Book-
Worm, and it is not agreeable to him to contemplate
the life of

THE BOOK-SELLER.



HE STANDS surrounded by rare tomes
Which find with him their transient homes,
He knows their fragrant covers ;
He keeps them but a week or two,
Surrenders then their charming view
To bibliomaniac lovers.

An enviable man, you say,
To own such wares if but a day,
And handle, see and smell ;
But all the time his spirit shrinks,
As wandering through his shop he thinks
He only keeps to sell.

The man who buys from him retains
His purchase long as life remains,
And then he doesn't mind
If his unbookish eager heirs,
Administering his affairs,
Shall throw them to the wind.

Or if in life he sells, in sooth,
'Tis parting with a single tooth,
A momentary pain ;
Booksellers, like Sir Walter's Jew,
Must this keen suffering renew,
Again and yet again.

And so we need not envy him
Who sells us books, for stark and grim

Remains this torture deep.
This Universalistic hell—
Throughout this life he's bound to sell ;
He has, but cannot keep.

*The
Book:
Worm*



XII.


THE PUBLIC LIBRARIAN.



HERE is one species of the Book-Worm which is more pitiable than the Bookseller, and that is the Public Librarian, especially of a circulating library. He is condemned to live among great collections of books and exhibit them to the curious public, and to be debarred from any proprietorship in them, even temporary. But the greater part this does not grieve a true Book-Worm, for he would scorn ownership of a vast majority of the books which he shows, but on the comparatively rare occasions when he is called on to produce a real book (in the sense of Bibliomania), he must be saddened by the reflection that it is not his own, and that the inspection of it is demanded of him as a matter of right. I have often observed the ill concealed reluctance with which the librarian complies with such a request; how he looks at the demandant with a degree of surprise, and then produces the key of the repository where the treasure is kept under guard, and heaving a sigh delivers the volume with a grudging hand. It was this characteristic which led me in my youth, before I had been inducted into the delights of Bibliomania and had learned to appreciate the feelings of a librarian,

to define him as one who conceives it to be his duty to prevent the public from seeing the books. I owe a good old librarian an apology for having said this of him, and hereby offer my excuses to one whose honorable name is recorded in the Book of Life. Much is to be forgiven to the man who loves books, and yet is doomed to deal out books that perish in the using, which no human being would ever read a second time nor "be found dead with." These are the true tests of a good book, especially the last. Shelley died with a little *Æschylus* on his person, which the cruel waves spared, and when Tennyson fell asleep it was with a *Shakespeare*, open at "*Cymbeline*." One may be excused for reading a good deal that he never would re-read, but not for owning it, nor for owning a good deal which he would feel ashamed to have for his last earthly companion. But now for my tribute to

THE PUBLIC LIBRARIAN.

 IS books extend on every side,
And up and down the vistas wide
His eye can take them in ;
He does not love these books at all,
Their usefulness in big and small
He counts as but a sin.

And all day long he stands to serve
The public with an aching nerve ;
He views them with disdain—

The student with his huge round glasses,
The maiden fresh from high school classes,
With apathetic brain ;

The sentimental woman lorn,
The farmer recent from his corn,
The boy who thirsts for fun,
The graybeard with a patent-right,
The pedagogue of school at night,
The fiction-gulping one.

They ask for histories, reports,
Accounts of turf and prize-ring sports,
The census of the nation ;
Philosophy and science too,
The fresh romances not a few,
Also " Degeneration."

" They call these books !" he said, and throws
Them down in careless heaps and rows
Before the ticket-holder ;
He'd like to cast them at his head,
He wishes they might strike him dead,
And with the reader moulder.

But now as for the shrine of saint
He seeks a spot whence sweet and faint
A leathery smell exudes,
And there behind the gilded wires
For some loved rarity inquires
Which common gaze eludes.

He wishes Omar would return
That vulgar mob of books to burn,
While he, like Virgil's hero,
Would shoulder off this precious case
To some secluded private place
With temperature at zero.

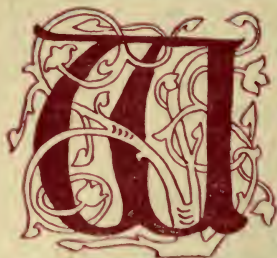
And there in that Seraglio
Of books not kept for public show,
He'd feast his glowing eyes,
Forgetting that these beauties rare,
Morocco-clad and passing fair,
Are but the Sultan's prize.

But then a tantalizing sense
Invades expectancy intense,
And with extorted moan,
"Unhappy man!" he sighs, "condemned
To show such treasure and to lend—
I keep, but cannot own!"



XIII.


DOES BOOK COLLECTING PAY.



NOW come to the sordid but serious consideration whether books are a "good investment" in the financial sense ♣ The mind of every true Book-Worm should revolt from this question, for none except a bookseller is pardonable for buying books with the design of selling them. Booksellers are a necessary evil, as purveyors for the Book-Worm ♣ I regard them as the old woman regarded the thirty-nine articles of faith; when inquired of by her bishop what she thought of them, she said, "I don't know as I've anything against them." So I don't know that I have anything against booksellers, although I must concede that they generally have something against me. As no well regulated man ever grudges expense on the house that forms his home, or on its adornment, and rarely cares or even reflects whether he can get his money back, so it is with the true bibliomaniac ♣ He never intends to part with his books any more than with his homestead. Then again the use and enjoyment of books ought to count for something like interest on the capital invested. Many times, directly or indirectly, the use of a library is worth even more than the interest on the outlay. It is singular how expenditure

in books is regarded as an extravagance by the business world. One may spend the price of a fine library in fast or showy horses, or in travel, or in gluttony, or in stock speculations eventuating on the wrong side of his ledger, and the money-grubbing community think none the worse of him. ♣ But let him expend annually a few thousands in books, and these sons of Mammon pull long faces, wag their shallow heads, and sneeringly observe, "screw loose somewhere," "never get half what he has paid for them," "too much of a Book-Worm to be a sharp business man." A man who boldly bets on stocks in Wall Street is a gallant fellow, forsooth, and excites the admiration of the business community (especially of those who thrive on his losses) even when he "comes out at the little end of the horn." As Ruskin observes, we frequently hear of a bibliomaniac, never of a horse-maniac. ♣ It is said there is a private stable in Syracuse, New York, which has cost several hundred thousand dollars. The owner is regarded as perfectly sane and the building is viewed with great pride by the public, but if the owner had expended as much on a private library his neighbors would have thought him a lunatic. If a man in business wants to excite the suspicion of the sleek gentlemen who sit around the discount board with him, or yell like lunatics at the stock exchange with him, or talk with him about the tariff or free silver, or any other subject on which no two men ever agree unless it is for their interest, let it leak out that he has put a few thousand dollars

into a Mazarine Bible, or a Caxton, or a first folio Shakespeare or some other rare book ♣ No matter if he can afford it, most of his associates regard him as they do a Bedlamite who goes about collecting straws. Fortunate is he if his wife does not privately call on the family attorney and advise with him about putting a committee over the poor man.

BUT if we must regard book-buying in a money sense, and were to admit that books never sell for as much as they cost, it is no worse in respect to books than in respect to any other species of personal property. What chattel is there for which the buyer can get as much as he paid, even the next day? When it is proposed to transform the seller himself into the buyer of the same article, we find that the bull of yesterday is converted into the bear of to-day. Circumstances alter cases. I have bought a good many books and "objects of bigotry and virtue," and have sold some, and the nearest I ever came to getting as much as I paid was in the case of a rare print, the seller of which, after the lapse of several years, solicited me to let him have it again, at exactly what I paid for it, in order that he might sell it to some one else at an advance. I declined his offer with profuse thanks, and keep the picture as a curiosity 

So I should say, as a rule, that books are not a good financial investment in the business sense, and speaking of most books and most buyers ♣ Give a man the same experience in buying books that renders

him expert in buying other personal property, the mere gross objects of trade, and let him set out with the purpose of accumulating a library that shall be a remunerative financial investment, and he may succeed, indeed, has often succeeded, certainly to the extent of getting back his outlay with interest, and sometimes making a handsome profit. But this needs experience ♣ Just as one must build at least two houses before he can exactly suit himself, so he must collect two libraries before he can get one that will prove a fair investment in the vulgar sense of trade.

IDARE say that one will frequently pay more for a fine microscope or telescope than he can ever obtain for it if he desires or is pressed to sell it, but who would or should stop to think of that? The power of prying into the mysteries of the earth and the wonders of the heavens should raise one's thoughts above such petty considerations. So it should be in buying that which enables one to converse with Shakespeare or Milton or scan the works of Raphael or Durer. When the pioneer on the western plains purchases an expensive rifle he does not inquire whether he can sell it for what it costs; his purpose is to defend his house against Indians and other wild beasts. So the true book-buyer buys books to fight weariness, disgust, sorrow and despair; to loose himself from the world and forget time and all its limitations and besetments. In this view they never cost too much. And

so when asked if book-collecting pays, I retort by asking, does piety pay? "Honesty is the best policy" is the meanest of maxims. Honesty ought to be a principle and not a policy; and book-collecting ought to be a means of education, refinement and enjoyment, and not a mode of financial investment.



XIV.

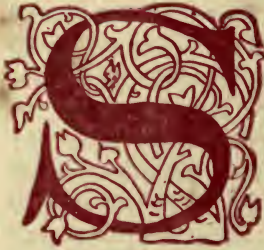
THE BOOK-WORM'S FAULTS.

The
Book-
Worm



HIS is not a case of "Snakes in Iceland," for the Book-Worm has faults. One of his faults is his proneness to regard books as mere merchandise and not as vehicles of intellectual profit, that is to say, to be read. Too many collectors buy books simply for their rarity and with too little regard to the value of their contents ♣ The Circassian slave-dealer does not care whether his girls can talk sense or not, and too many men buy books with a similar disregard to their capacity for instructing or entertaining. It seems to me that a man who buys books which he does not read, and especially such as he cannot read, merely on account of their value as merchandise, degrades the noble passion of bibliomania to the level of a trade ♣ When I go through such a library I think of what Christ said to the traders in the Temple. Another fault is his lack of independence and his tendency to imitate the recognized leaders. He is too prone to buy certain books simply because another has them, and thus even rare collections are apt to fall into a tiresome routine ♣ The collector who has a hobby and independence to ride it is admirable. Let him addict himself to some particular subject or era or "ana," and try to exhaust it, and before he is conscious he will have accumulated a collection precious for its

very singularity. It strikes me that the best example of this idea that I have ever heard of is the attempt, in which two collectors in this country are engaged, to acquire the first or at least one specimen of every one of the five hundred fifteenth century printers. If this should ever succeed, the great libraries of all the world would be eager for it, and the undertaking is sufficiently arduous to last a lifetime.



SOMETIMES out of this fault, sometimes independently of it, arises the fault by which book collecting degenerates into mere rivalry—the vulgar desire of display and ambition for a larger or rarer or costlier accumulation than one's neighbor has ♣ The determination not to be outdone does not lend dignity or worth to the pursuit which would otherwise be commendable. During the late civil war in this country the chaplain of a regiment informed his colonel, who was not a godly person, that there was a hopeful revival of religion going on in a neighboring and rival regiment, and that forty men had been converted and baptized. "Dashed if I will submit to that," said the swearing colonel: "Adjutant, detail fifty men for baptism instantly!" So Mr. Roe, hearing that Mr. Doe has acquired a Caxton or other rarity of a certain height, and absolutely flawless except that the corners of the last leaf have been skillfully mended and that six leaves are slightly foxed, cannot rest

night or day for envy, but is like the troubled sea until he can find a copy a sixteenth of an inch taller, the corners of whose leaves are in their pristine integrity, and over whose brilliant surface the smudge of the fox has not been cast, and then how high is his exaltation! Not that he cares anything for the book intrinsically, but he glories in having beaten Doe ♣ Now if any speaks to him of Doe's remarkable copy, he can draw out his own and create a surprise in the bosom of Doe's adherent. The laurels of Miltiades no longer deprive him of rest. He has overcome in this trivial and childish strife concerning size and condition, and he holds the champion's belt for the present. He not only feels big himself but he has succeeded in making Doe feel small, which is still better. I don't know whether there will be any book-collecting in Mr. Bellamy's Utopia, but if there is, it will not be disfigured by such meanness, but collectors will go about striving to induce others to accept their superior copies and everything will be as lovely as in Heine's heaven, where geese fly around ready cooked, and if one treads on your corn it conveys a sensation of exquisite delight.

IT HAS been several times remarked by moralists that human nature is selfish. One of course does not expect another to relinquish to him his place in a "queue" at a box-office or his turn at a barber's shop, but in the noble and elegant pursuit of book-collecting it would be well to emulate the politeness of the French at

Fontenoy, and hat in hand offer our antagonist the first shot ♣. But I believe the only place where the Book-Worm ever does that is the auction room.



HE modern Book-Worm is not the simple and absent-minded creature who went by this name a century ago or more. He is no mere antiquarian, Dryasdust or Dominie Sampson, but he is a sharp merchant, or a relentless broker, or a professional railroad wrecker, or a keen lawyer, or a busy physician, or a great manufacturer—a wide awake man of affairs, quite devoid of the conventional innocence and credulity which formerly made the name of Book-Worm suggestive of a necessity for a guardian or a committee in lunacy ♣. No longer does he inquire, as Becatello inquired of Alphonso, King of Naples, which had done the better—Poggius, who sold a Livy, fairly writ in his own hand, to buy a country home near Florence, or he, who to buy a Livy had sold a piece of land? No longer is the scale turned in the negotiation of a treaty between princes by the weight of a rare book, as when Cosimo dei Medici persuaded King Alphonso

I no sooner come into the library, but I bolt the door to me, excluding lust, ambition, avarice, and all such vices, whose nurse is idleness, the mother of ignorance, and melancholy herself, and in the very lap of eternity, among so many divine souls, I take my seat with so lofty a spirit and sweet content, that I pity all our great ones and rich men that know not this happiness.

—Heinsius.

of Naples to a peace by sending him a codex of Livy. No longer does the Book-Worm sit in his modest book-room, absorbed in his adored volumes, heedless of the waning lamp and the setting star, of hunger and thirst, unmindful of the scent of the clover wafted in at the window, deaf to the hum of the bees and the low of the kine, blind to the glow of sunsets and the soft contour of the blue hills, and the billowy swaying of the wheat field before the gentle breath of the south. No longer can it be said that

THE BOOK-WORM DOES NOT CARE FOR NATURE.

FEEL no need of nature's flowers—
Of flowers of rhetoric I have store ;
I do not miss the balmy showers—
When books are dry I o'er them pore.

Why should I sit upon a stile
And cause my aged bones to ache,
When I can all the hours beguile
With any style that I would take ?


Why should I haunt a purling stream,
Or fish in miasmatic brook ?
O'er Euclid's angles I can dream,
And recreation find in Hook.

Why should I jolt upon a horse
And after wretched vermin roam,
When I can choose an easier course
With Fox and Hare and Hunt at home ?

Why should I scratch my precious skin
By crawling through a hawthorne hedge,
When Hawthorne, raking up my sin,
Stands tempting on the nearest ledge ?

No need that I should take the trouble
To go abroad to walk or ride,
For I can sit at home and double
Quite up with pain from Akenside.



HE modern Book-Worm deals in sums of six figures ; he keeps an agent "on the other side ;" he cables his demands and his decisions ; his name flutters the doves in the auction-room ; to him is proffered the first chance at a rarity worth a King's ransom ; too busy to potter in person with such a trifle as the purchase of a Mazarine Bible, he hires others to do the hunting and he merely receives the game ; the tiger skin and the elephant's tusk are laid at his feet to order, but he misses all the joy and ardor of the hunt. How different is all this from Sir Thomas Urquhart's account of his own library, of which he says : " There were not three works therein which were not of mine own purchase, and all of them together, in the order wherein I had ranked them, compiled like to a complete nosegay of flowers, which in my travels I had gathered out of the gardens of sixteen several kingdoms." 

Another fault of the Book-Worm is the affectation

of collecting books on subjects in which he takes no practical interest, simply because it is the fashion or the books are intrinsically beautiful. Many a man has a fine collection on Angling, for example, who hardly knows how to put a worm on a hook, much less attach a fly ♣ I fear I am one of these hypocritical creatures, for this is

The
Book-
Worm

HOW I GO A-FISHING.

IS sweet to sit in shady nook,
Or wade in rapid crystal brook,
Impervious in rubber boots,
And wary of the slippery roots,
To snare the swift evasive trout
Or eke the sauntering horn-pout ;
Or in the cold Canadian river
To see the glorious salmon quiver,
And them with tempting hook inveigle,
Fit viand for a table regal ;
Or after an exciting bout
To snatch the pike with sharpened snout ;
Or with some patient ass to row
To troll for bass with motion slow.
Oh ! joy supreme when they appear
Splashing above the water clear,
And drawn reluctantly to land
Lie gasping on the yellow sand !
But sweeter far to read the books
That treat of flies and worms and hooks,
From Pickering's monumental page,

*The
Book:
Worm*

(Late rivalled by the rare Dean Sage),
And Major's elder issues neat,
To Burnand's funny "Incomplete."
I love their figures quaint and queer,
Which on the inviting page appear,
From those of good Dame Juliana,
Who lifts a fish and cries hosanna,
To those of Stothard, graceful Quaker,
Of fishy art supremest maker,
Whose fisherman, so dry and neat,
Would never soil a parlor seat.
I love them all, the books on angling,
And far from cares and business jangling,
Ensconced in cosy chimney-corner,
Like the traditional Jack Horner,
I read from Walton down to Lang,
And hum that song the Milkmaid sang.
I get not tired nor wet nor cross,
Nor suffer monetary loss—
If fish are shy and will not bite,
And shun the snare laid in their sight—
In order home at night to bring
A fraudulent, deceitful string,
And thus escape the merry jeers
Of heartless piscatory peers ;
Nor have to listen to the lying
Of fishermen while fish are frying,
Who boast of draughts miraculous
Which prove too large a draught on us.
I spare the rod, and rods don't break ;

Nor fish in sight the hook forsake ;
My lines ne'er snap like corset laces ;
My lines are fallen in pleasant places.
And so in sage experience ripe,
My fishery is but a type.

The
Book-
Worm



POVERTY AS A MEANS OF ENJOYMENT IN
COLLECTING.



OUR collectors are not only not at a disadvantage in enjoyment, but they have a positive advantage over affluent rivals. If I were rich, probably I should not throw my money away just to experience this superiority, but it nevertheless exists. I do not envy, but I commiserate my brother collector who has plenty of money. He who only has to draw his check to obtain his desire fails to reach the keenest bliss of the pursuit. If diamonds were as common as cobble stones there would be no delight in picking them up

To constitute a bibliomaniac in the true sense, the love of books must combine with a certain limitation of means for the gratification of the appetite. The consciousness of some extravagance must be always present in his mind; there must be a sense of sacrifice in the attainment; in a rich man the disease cannot exist; he cannot enter the kingdom of the Bibliomaniac's heaven. There is the same difference of sensation between the acquirement of books by a wealthy man and by him of slender purse, that there is between the taking of fish in a net and the successful result of a long angling pursuit after one especially fat and evasive trout. When a prince kills

his preserved game, with keepers to raise it for him and to hand him guns ready loaded, so that all he has to do is to squint and pull the trigger, this is not hunting; it is mere vulgar butchery ♣ What knows he of the joys of the tramper in the forest, who stalks the deer, or scares up smaller game, singly, and has to work hard for his bag? We read in Dibdin's sumptuous pages of the celebrated contest between the Duke of Devonshire and the Marquis of Blandford for the possession of the Valdarfar Decameron; we read with admiration, but we also read of the immortal battle of Elia with the little squab-keeper of the old book-stall in Ninety-four alley, over the ownership of a ragged duodecimo for a sixpence; we read with affection ♣ So we read Leigh Hunt's confession that when he "cut open a new catalogue of old books, and put crosses against dozens of volumes in the list, out of the pure imagination of buying them, the possibility being out of the question." ♣ Poverty hath her victories no less renowned than wealth. To haunt the book-stores, there to see a long-desired work in luxurious and tempting style, reluctantly to abandon it for the present on account of the price; to go home and dream about it, to wonder, for a year, and perchance longer, whether it will ever again greet your eyes; to conjecture what act of desperation you might in heat of passion commit toward some more affluent man in whose possession you should thereafter find it; to see it turn up again in another book-shop, its charms slightly faded, but

yet mellowed by age, like those of your first love, met in later life—with this difference, however, that whereas you crave those of the book more than ever, you are generally quite satisfied with yourself for not having, through the greenness of youth, yielded untimely to those of the lady; to ask with assumed indifference the price, and learn with ill-dissembled joy that it is now within your means; to say you'll take it; to place it beneath your arm, and pay for it (or more generally order it "charged"); to go forth from that room with feelings akin to those of Ulysses when he brought away the Palladium from Troy; to keep a watchful eye on the parcel in the railway coach on your way home, or to gloat over the treasures of its pages, and wonder if the other passengers have any suspicion of your good fortune; and finally to place the volume on your shelf, and thenceforth to call it your own—this is indeed a pleasure denied to the affluent, so keen as to be akin to pain, and only marred by the palling which always follows possession and the presentation of your book-seller's account three months afterwards.



XVI.

THE ARRANGEMENT OF BOOKS.

*The
Book-
Worm*



HERE was a time when I loved to see my books arranged with a view to uniformity of height and harmony of color without respect to subjects. That time I regard as my vealy period ♣ That was the time when we admired "Somnambula," and when the housewife used to have all the pictures hung on the same level, and to buy vases in pairs exactly alike and put them on either side of the parlor clock, which was generally surmounted by a prancing Saracen or a weaving Penelope. Granting that a collection is not extensive enough to demand a strict arrangement by subjects, I like to see a little artistic confusion—high and low together here and there, like a democratic community ; now and then some giants laid down on their sides to rest ; the shelves not uniformly filled out as if the owner never expected to buy any more, and alongside a dainty Angler a book in red or blue cloth with a white label—just as children in velvet and furs sit next a newsboy, or a little girl in calico with a pigtail at Sunday School, or as beggars and princes kneel side by side on the cathedral pavement. It is good to have these "swell" books rub up against the commoners, which though not so elegant are frequently a great deal brighter. At a country

**The
Book-
Worm**

funeral I once heard the undertaker say to the bearers, "size yourselves off." There is no necessity or artistic gain in such a ceremony in a library, and a departure from stiff uniformity is quite agreeable ♣ Then I do not care to have the book cases all of the same height, nor even of the same kind of wood, nor to have them all "dwarfs," with bric-a-brac on the top. I would rather have more books on top ♣ In short, it is pleasant to have the collection remind one in a way of Topsy—not that it was "born," but "growed" and is expected to grow more ♣ There is a modern notion of considering a library as a room rather than as a collection of books, and of making the front drawing-room the library, which is heretical in the eyes of a true Book-Worm. This is probably an invention of the women of the house to prevent any additions to the books without their knowledge, and to discourage book-buying. We have surrendered too much to our wives in this; they demand book cases as furniture and to serve as shelves, without any regard to the interior contents or whether there are any, except for the color of the bindings and the regularity of the rows. All of us have thus seen "libraries" without books worthy the name, and book-cases sometimes with exquisite silk curtains, carefully and closely drawn, arousing the suspicion that there were no



books behind them ♣ My ideal library is a room
given up to books, all by itself, at the top or in
the rear of the house, where "company"
cannot break through and say to me, "I
know you are a great man to buy
books — have you seen that
beautiful limited holiday
edition of Ben Hur,
with illustra-
tions ?'



**The
Book-
Worm**

XVII.

ENEMIES OF BOOKS.



R. BLADES regards as "Enemies of Books" fire, water, gas, heat, dust and neglect, ignorance and bigotry, the worm, beetles, bugs and rats, book-binders, collectors, servants and children ♣ He does not include women, borrowers, or thieves. Perhaps he considers them rather as enemies of the book-owners ♣ The worm is not always to be considered an enemy to authors, although he may be to books. James Payn, in speaking of the recent discovery, in the British Museum, of a copy on papyrus of the humorous poems of the obscure Greek poet, Herodiles, says: "The humorous poems of Herodiles possess, however, the immense advantage of being 'seriously mutilated by worms'; wherever therefore an hiatus occurs, the charitable and cultured mind will be enabled to conclude that (as in the case of a second descent upon a ball supper) the 'best things' have been already devoured." It was doubtless to guard against thieves that the ancient books were chained up in the monasteries, but the practice was effectual also against borrowers. De Bury, in his "Philobiblon" has a chapter entitled "A Provident Arrangement by which his Books may be lent to Strangers," in which the utmost leniency is to lend duplicate books upon ample security. Not to adopt the harsh judg-

ment of an ancient author, who says, "to lend a book is to lose it, and borrowing but a hypocritical pretense for stealing," we may conclude, in a word, that to lend a book is like the Presidency of the United States, to be neither desired nor refused. Collectors are not so much exposed to the ravages of thieves as book-sellers are, and a book-thief ought to be regarded with leniency for his good taste and his reliance on the existence of culture in others. After all, it is one's own fault if he lends a book. One should as soon think of lending one of his children, unless he has duplicate or triplicate daughters. It would be difficult to foretell what would happen to a man who should propose to borrow a rare book. Perhaps death by freezing would be the safest prediction. Although Grolier stamped "et amicorum" on his books, that did not mean that he would lend them, but only that his friends were free of them at his house. It is amusing to note, in Mr. Castle's monograph on Book-Plates, how many of them indicate a stern purpose not to lend books. Mr. Gosse regards book-plates as a precaution not only against thieves, but against borrowers. He observes of the man who does not adopt a book-plate: "Such a man is liable to great temptations. He is brought face to face with that enemy of his species, the borrower, and does not speak with him in the gate. If he had a book-plate he would say, 'Oh! certainly I will lend you this volume, if it has not my book-plate in it; of course one makes it a rule never to lend a

book that has.' He would say this and feign to look inside the volume, knowing right well that this safeguard against the borrower is there already." One may make a gift of a book to a friend, but there is as much difference between giving a book and lending one as there is between indorsing a note and giving the money. I have considerable respect for and sympathy with a good honest book-thief. He holds out no false hopes and makes no false pretences. But the borrower who does not return adds hypocrisy and false pretences to other crime. He ought to be committed to the State prison for life, and put at keeping the books of the institution. In a buried temple in Cnidos, in 1857, Mr. Newton found rolls of lead hung up, on which were inscribed spells devoting enemies to the infernal gods for sundry specified offenses, among which was the failure to return a borrowed garment ♣ On which Agnes Repplier says: "Would that it were given to me now to inscribe, and by inscribing doom, all those who have borrowed and failed to return our books; would that by scribbling some strong language on a piece of lead we could avenge the lamentable gaps on our shelves, and send the ghosts of the wrong-doers howling dismally into the eternal shades of Tartarus."

I HAVE spoken of a certain amount of sympathy as due from a magnanimous book-owner toward a pilferer of such wares. This is always on the condition that he steals to add to his own hoard and not for mere pecuniary

gain. The following is suggested as a Christian mode
of dealing with

*The
Book-
Worm*

THE BOOK-THIEF.

AH, gentle thief!
I marked the absent-minded air
With which you tucked away my rare
Book in your pocket.

'Twas past belief—
I saw you near the open case,
But yours was such an honest face
I did not lock it.

I knew you lacked
That one to make your set complete,
And when that book you chanced to meet
You recognized it.

And when attacked
By rage of bibliophilic greed,
You prigged that small Quantin Ovide,
Although I prized it.

I will not sue,
Nor bring your family to shame
By giving up your honored name
To heartless prattle.

I'll visit you,
And under your unwary eyes
Secrete and carry off the prize,
My ravished chattel.

IT GREATLY rejoices me to observe that Mr. Blades does not include tobacco among the enemies of books. In one sense tobacco may be ranked as a book-enemy, for self-denial in this regard may furnish a man with a good library in a few years. I have known a very pretty collection made out of the ordinary smoke-offerings of twenty years. Undoubtedly there are libraries so fine that smoking in them would be discountenanced, but mine is not impervious to the pipe or cigar, and I entertain the pleasing fancy that tobacco-smoke is good for books, disinfects them, and keeps them free from the destroying worm. As I do not myself smoke, I like to see my friends taking their ease in my book-room, with the "smoke of their torment ascending" above my modest volumes. I know how they feel, without incurring the expense, and so to them I indite and dedicate

THE SMOKE TRAVELLER.

WHEN I puff my cigarette,
Straight I see a Spanish girl,
Mantilla, fan, coquettish curl,
Languid airs and dimpled face,
Calculating fatal grace ;
Hear a twittering serenade
Under lofty balcony played ;
Queen at bull-fight, naught she cares
What her agile lover dares ;
She can love and quick forget.

Let me but my meerschaum light,
I behold a bearded man,
Built upon capacious plan,
Sabre-slashed in war or duel,
Gruff of aspect but not cruel,
Metaphysically muddled,
With strong beer a little fuddled,
Slow in love and deep in books,
More sentimental than he looks,
Swears new friendships every night.

Let me my chibouk enkindle,—
In a tent I'm quick set down
With a Bedouin lean and brown,
Plotting gain of merchandise,
Or perchance of robber prize;
Clumsy camel load upheaving,
Woman deftly carpet weaving;
Meal of dates and bread and salt,
While in azure heavenly vault
Throbbing stars begin to dwindle.

Glowing coal in clay dudheen
Carries me to sweet Killarney,
Full of hypocritic blarney;
Huts with babies, pigs and hens
Mixed together; bogs and fens;
Shillalahs, praties, usquebaugh,
Tenants defying hated law,
Fair blue eyes with lashes black,

Eyes black and blue from cudgel-thwack,—
So fair, so foul, is Erin green.

My nargileh once inflamed,
Quick appears a Turk with turban,
Girt with guards in palace urban,
Or in house by summer sea
Slave-girls dancing languidly ;
Bow-string, sack and bastinado,
Black boats darting in the shadow ;
Let things happen as they please,
Whether well or ill at ease,
Fate alone is blessed or blamed.

With my ancient calumet
I can raise a wigwam's smoke,
And the copper tribe invoke,—
Scalps and wampum, bows and knives,
Slender maidens, greasy wives,
Papoose hanging on a tree,
Chieftains squatting silently,
Feathers, beads and hideous paint,
Medicine-man and wooden saint,—
Forest-framed the vision set.

My cigar breeds many forms—
Planter of the rich Havana,
Mopping brow with sheer bandanna ;
Russian prince in fur arrayed ;
Paris fop on dress parade ;
London swell just after dinner ;

Wall Street broker—gambling sinner ;
Delver in Nevada mine ;
Scotch laird bawling “ Auld Lang Syne ; ”
Thus Raleigh’s weed my fancy warms.

The
Book:
Worm

Life’s review in smoke goes past.
Fickle fortune, stubborn fate,
Right discovered all too late,
Beings loved and gone before,
Beings loved but friends no more,
Self-reproach and futile sighs,
Vanity in birth that dies,
Longing, heart-break, adoration,—
Nothing sure in expectation
Save ash-receiver at the last.

IN THE early history of New England, when the town of Deerfield was burned by the Indians, Captain Dunstan, who was the father of a large family, deeming discretion the better part of valor, made up his mind to run for it and to take one child (as a sample, probably), that being all he could safely carry on his horse. But on looking about him, he could not determine which child to take, and so observing to his wife, “ All or none,” he set her and the baby on the horse, and brought up the rear on foot with his gun, and fended off the redskins and brought the whole family into safety. Such is the tale, and in the old primer there was a picture of the scene—although I do not

understand that it was taken from the life, and the story reflects small credit on the character of the aborigines for enterprise.

I HAVE often conjectured which of my books I would save in case of fire in my library, and whether I should care to rescue any if I could not bring off all. Perhaps the problem would work itself out as follows :

THE FIRE IN THE LIBRARY.

I WAS just before midnight a smart conflagration
Broke out in my dwelling and threatened my
books ;

Confounded and dazed with a great consternation
I gazed at my treasures with pitiful looks.

“Oh ! which shall I rescue ? ” I cried in deep feeling ;
I wished I were armed like Briareus of yore,
While sharper and sharper the flames kept revealing
The sight of my bibliographical store.

“ My Lamb may remain to be thoroughly roasted,
My Crabbe to be broiled and my Bacon to fry,
My Browning accustomed to being well toasted,
And Waterman Taylor rejoicing to dry.”

At hazard I grasped at the rest of my treasure,
And crammed all pockets with dainty eighteens ;
I packed up a pillow case, heaping good measure,
And turned me away from the saddest of scenes.

But slowly departing, my face growing sadder,
At leaving old favorites behind me so far,

A feminine voice from the foot of the ladder
Cried, "Bring down my Cook-Book and Harper's
Bazar!"

*The
Book-
Worm*

IT HAS been hereinbefore intimated that women may be classed among the enemies of books. There is at least one time of the year when every Book-Worm thinks so, and that is the dread period of house-cleaning—sometimes in the spring, sometimes in the autumn, and sometimes, in the case of excessively finical housewives, in both ♣ That is the time looked forward to by him with apprehension and looked back upon with horror, because the poor fellow knows what comes of

CLEANING THE LIBRARY.

WITH traitorous kiss remarked my spouse,
"Remain down town to lunch to-day,
For we are busy cleaning house,
And you would be in Minnie's way."

When I came home that fateful night,
I found within my sacred room
The wretched maid had wreaked her spite
With mop and pail and witch's broom.

The books were there, but oh how changed!
They startled me with rare surprises,
For they had all been rearranged,
And less by subjects than by sizes.


Some volumes numbered right to left,
And some were standing on their heads,
And some were of their mates bereft,
And some behind for refuge fled.

The women brave attempts had made
At placing cognate books together;—
They looked like strangers close arrayed
Under a porch in stormy weather.

She watched my face—that spouse of mine—
Some approbation there to glean,
But seeing I did not incline
To praise, remarked, “I’ve got it clean.”

And so she had—and also wrong;
She little knew—she was but thirty—
I entertained a preference strong
To have it right, though ne’er so dirty.

That wife of mine has much good sense,
To chide her would have been inhuman,
And it would be a great expense
To graft the book-sense on a woman.

UCH are my reflections when I consider
a fire in my own little library. But when
I regard the great and growing mass of
books with which the earth groans, and
reflect how few of them are necessary or original,
and how little the greater part of them would be
missed, I sometimes am led to believe that a general
conflagration of them might in the long run be a

blessing to mankind, by the stimulation of thought and the deliverance of authors from the influence of tradition and the habit of imitation. When I am in this mood I incline to think that much is

*The
Book-
Worm*

ODE TO OMAR.



MAR, who burned (or did not burn)

The Alexandrian tomes,
I would erect to thee an urn
Beneath Sophia's domes.

So many books I can't endure—
The dull and commonplace,
The dirty, trifling and obscure,
The realistic race.

Would that thy exemplary torch
Could bravely blaze again,
And many manufactories scorch
Of book-inditing men.

The poets who write "dialect,"
Maudlin and coarse by turns,
Most ardently do I expect
Thou'lt wither up with Burns.

All the erratic, yawping class
Condemn with judgment stern,
Walt Whitman's awful "Leaves of Grass"
With elegant Swinburne.

Of commentators make a point,
The carping, blind, and dry;

Rend the "Baconians" joint by joint,
And throw them on to fry.

Especially I'd have thee choke
Law libraries in sheep
With fire derived from ancient Coke,
And sink in ashes deep.

Destroy the sheep—don't save my own—
I weary of the cram,
The misplaced diligence I've shown—
But kindly spare my Lamb.

Fear not to sprinkle on the pyre
The woes of "Esther Waters";
They'll only make the flame soar higher,
And warn Eve's other daughters.

But 'ware of Howells and of James,
Of Trollope and his rout;
They'd dampen down the fiercest flames
And put your fire out.



XVIII.

LIBRARY COMPANIONS.

The
Book-
Worm



S A RULE I do not care for any constant human companion in my library, but I do not object to a cat or a small dog. ♣ That picture of Montaigne, drawn by himself, amusing his cat with a garter, or that other one of Doctor Johnson feeding oysters to his cat Hodge, is a very pleasing one. In my library hangs Durer's picture of St. Jerome in his cell, busy with his writing, and a dog and a lion quietly dozing together in the foreground. As I am no saint I have never been able to keep a lion in my library for any great length of time, but I have maintained a dog there. ♣ Lamb even contended that his books were the better for being dog's-eared, but I do not go so far as that. Nor do I pretend that his presence will prevent the books from becoming foxed. Here is a portrait of

MY DOG.

HE IS a trifling, homely beast,
Of no use, or the very least;
To shake imaginary rat
Or bark for hours at china cat;
To lie at head of stairs and start,
Like animated, woolly dart,
Upon a non-existent foe;

The
Book-
Worm

Or on hind legs like monkey go,
To beg for sugar or for bone ;
Never content to be alone ;
To bask for hours in the sun,
Rolled up till head and tail are one ;
Usurping all the softest places
And keeping them with doggish graces ;
To sneak between the housemaid's feet
And scour unnoticed on the street ;
Wag indefatigable tail ;
Cajole with piteous human wail ;
To dance with dainty dandy air
When nicely parted is his hair,
And look most ancient and dejected
When it has been too long neglected ;
To sleep upon my book-den rug
And dream of battle with a pug ;
To growl with counterfeited rabies ;
To be more trouble than twin babies ;—
These are the qualities and tricks
That in my heart his image fix ;
And so in cursory, doggerel rhyme
I celebrate him in his time,
Nor wait his virtues to rehearse
In cold obituary verse.



HERE is one other speaking companion
that I would tolerate in my library, and
that is a clock. I have a number of clocks
in mine, and if it were not for their unani-

mous and warning voice I might forget to go to bed.
Perhaps my reader would like to hear an account of

MY CLOCKS.

FIVE clocks adorn my domicile
And give me occupation,
For moments else inane I fill
With their due regulation.

Four of these clocks, on each Lord's Day,
As regular as preaching,
I wind and set, so that they may
The flight of time be teaching.

My grandfather's old clock is chief,
With foolish moon-faced dial;
Procrastination is a thief
It always brings to trial.

Its height is as the tallest men,
Its pendulum beats slow,
And when its awful bell booms ten,
Young men get up and go.

Another clock is bronze and gilt,
Penelope sits on it,
And in her fingers holds a quilt—
How strange 'tis not a bonnet!

Memorial of those weary years
When she the web unravelled,
While Ithacus choked down his fears
And slow from Ilium travelled.

*The
Book-
Worm*

*The
Book:
Worm*

Ceres upon the third, with spray
Of grain, in classic gown,
Seems sadly to recall the day
Proserpine sank down,
With scarcely time to say good-bye,
Unto the world of Dis ;
And keeps account, with many a sigh,
Of harvest time in this.

Another clock is rococo,
Of Louis Sept or Seize,
With many a dreadful furbelow
An artist's hair to raise,
Suggestions of a giddy court,
With fan and bouffant bustle,
When silken trains made gallant sport
And o'er the floor did rustle.

The fourth was brought, in foolish trust,
From Alpland far away,
A baby clock, and so it must
Be tended every day.

Importunate and trivial thing !
Thou katydid of clocks !
Defying all my skill to bring
Right time from out thy box.

With works of wood and face of brass
On which queer cherubs play,
The tedious hours thou well dost pass,
And none thy chirp gainsay.

AMONG the silent companions in my study are the effigies of the four greatest geniuses of modern times in the realms of literature, art, music and war—a print of Shakespeare; one of Michael Angelo's corrugated face with its broken nose; a bust of Beethoven, resembling a pouting lion; and a print of Napoleon at St. Helena, representing him dressed in a white duck suit, with a broad-brimmed straw hat, and sitting looking seaward, with those unfathomable eyes, a newspaper lying in his lap ♣ Unhappy faces all except the first—his cheerful, probably because he has effected an arrangement with an otherwise idle person, named Bacon, to do all his work for him. But there is another portrait, at which I look oftener, the original of which probably takes more interest in me, but is unknown to every visitor to my study. I myself have not seen her in half a century ♣ I call it simply

A PORTRAIT.

AGENTLE face is ever in my room,
With features fine and melancholy eyes,
Though young, a little past life's freshest bloom,
And always with air of sad surmise.

A great white cap almost conceals her hair,
A collar broad falls o'er her shoulders slender;
The fashion of a bygone age an air
Of quaintness to her simple garb doth render.

Those hazel eyes pursue me as I move
And seem to watch my busy toiling pen ;
They hold me with an anxious yearning love,
As if she dwelt upon the earth again.

My mother's portrait ! fifty years ago,
When I was but a heedless happy boy,
The influence of her being ceased to flow,
And she laid down life's burden and its joy.

And now as I sit pondering o'er my books,
So vainly seeking a receding rest,
I read the wonder in her steadfast looks :

“ Is this my son who lay upon my breast ? ”

And when for me there is an end of time,
And this unsatisfying work is done,
If I shall meet thee in thy peaceful clime,
Young mother, wilt thou know thy gray-haired
son ?



HERE is one other work of art which
adorns my library—a medallion by a dear
friend of mine, an eminent sculptor, the
story of which I will put into his mouth.

He calls the face


MY SCHOOLMATE.

H E snows have settled on my head
But not upon my heart,
And incidents of years long fled
From out my memory start.
My hand is cunning to contrive

The shapes my brain invents,
And keep in marble forms alive
That which my soul contents ;
And I have wife, and children tall,
Grandchildren cluster near,
And sweet the applause of men doth fall
On my undeafened ear.
But still my mind will backward turn
For half a century,
And without reasoning will yearn
For sight or news of thee,
Thou playmate of my boyhood days,
When life was all aglow,
When the sweetest thing was thy girlish praise,
As I drew thee o'er the snow
To the old red school-house by the road,
Where we learned to spell and read,
When thou wert all my fairy load
And I was thy prancing steed.
Oh ! thou wert simple then and fair.
Artless and unconstrained,
With quaintly knotted auburn hair
From which the wind refrained,
And from thine earnest steady eyes
Shone out a nature pure,
Formed by kind Heaven, a man's best prize,
To love and to endure.
Oh ! art thou still in life and time,
Or hast thou gone before ?

The
Book-
Worm

And hath thy lot been like to mine,
Or pinched and bare and sore ?
And didst thou marry, or art thou
Still of the spinster tribe ?
Perchance thou art a widow now,
Steeled against second bribe ?
Do grandsons round thy hearthstone play,
Or dost thou end thy race ?
And could that auburn hair grow gray,
And wrinkles line thy face ?
I cannot make thee old and plain—
I would not if I could—
And I recall thee without stain,
Simply and sweetly good ;
And I have carved thy pretty head
And hung it on my wall,
And to all men let it be said,
I like it best of all ;
For on a far-off snowy road,
Before I had learned to read,
Thou wert all my fairy load
And I was thy prancing steed !

 HAVE reserved my queerest library companion till the last. It is not a book, although it is good for nothing but to read. It is not an autograph, although it is simply the name of an individual ☘ It is my office sign which I have cherished, as a memento of busier days. Some singular reflections are roused when I gaze at

MY SHINGLE.

The
Book-
Worm

MY SHINGLE is battered and old,
No longer deciphered with ease,
So I've taken it in from the cold,
And fastened it up on a frieze.

A long generation ago,
With feelings of singular pride
I regarded its glittering show,
And pointed it out to my bride.

Companions of youth have grown few,
Its loves and aversions are faint ;
No spirit to make friends anew—
An old enemy seems like a saint.

My clients have paid the last fee
For passage in Charon's sad boat,
Imposing no duty on me
Save to utter this querelous note ;

And still as I toil in life's mills,
In loneliness growing profound,
To attend on the proof of their wills
And swear that their wits were quite sound !

So I work with the scissors and pen,
And to show of old courage a spark,
I must utter a jest now and then,
Like whistling of boys in the dark.

I tack my old friend on the wall,
So that infantile grandson of mine

May not think, if my life he recall,
That I died without making a sign.

When at court on the great judgment day
With penitent suitors I mingle,
May my guilt be washed cleanly away,
Like that on my faded old shingle !



MY COURSE my chief occupation in my library is reading and writing. To be sure, I do a good deal of thinking there. But there is another occupation which I practice to a great extent, which does not involve reading or writing at all, nor thinking to any considerable degree. That is playing solitaire. I play only one kind of this and that I have played for many years ♣ It requires two packs of cards, and requires building on the aces and kings, and so I have them tacked down on a lap-board to save picking out and laying down every time ♣ This particular game is called "St. Elba," probably because Napoleon did not play it, and it can be "won" once in about sixty trials. I do not care for card-playing with others, but I have certain reasons for liking

SOLITAIRE.



LIKE to play cards with a man of sense,
And allow him to play with me,
And so it has grown a delight intense
To play solitaire on my knee.

I love the quaint form of the sceptered king,
The simplicity of the ace,
The stolid knave like a wooden thing,
And her majesty's smirking face.

Diamonds, aces, and clubs and spades—
Their garb of respectable black
A moiety brilliant of red invades,
As they mingle in motley pack.

Independent of anyone's signal or leave,
Relieved from the bluffing of poker,
I've no apprehension of ace up a sleeve,
And fear no superfluous joker.

I build up and down; all the cards I hold,
And the game is always fair,
For I am honest, and so is my old
Companion at solitaire.

Let kings condescend to the lower grades,
Queens glitter with diamonds rare,
Knives flourish their clubs, and peasants wield
spades,
But give me my solitaire.



THE FRIENDSHIP OF BOOKS.



TO MANY peaceful men of the legal robe the companionship of books is inexpressibly dear. What a privilege it is to summon the greatest and most charming spirits of the past from their graves, and find them always willing to talk to us ! How delightful to go to our well-known book-shelves, lay hands on our favorite authors—even in the dark, so well do we know them—take any volume, open it at any page, and in a few minutes lose all sense and remembrance of the real world, with its strife, its bitterness, its disappointments, its hollowness, its unfaithfulness, its selfishness, in the pictures of an ideal world ! ❀ The real world, do we say ? Which is the real world, that of history or that of fiction ? In this age of historic doubt and iconoclasm, are not the heroes of our favorite romances much more real than those of history ? Captain Ed'ard Cuttle, mariner, is much more real to us than Captain Joseph Cook ; Cooper's Two Admirals than the great Nelson ; Leather-Stocking than the yellow-haired Custer ; Henry Esmond than any of the Pretenders ; Hester Prynne and Becky Sharp than Catherine of Russia or Aspasia or Lucretia ; Sidney Carton than Philip Sidney. Even the kings and heroes who have lived in history live more vividly for us in romance. We know the crooked

Richard and the crafty Louis XI. most familiarly, if not most accurately, through Shakespeare and Scott ; and where in history do we get so haunting a picture of the great Napoleon and Waterloo as in Victor Hugo's wondrous but inaccurate chapter ? Happy is the man who has for his associates David, Solomon, Job, Paul, and John, in spite of the assaults of modern criticism upon the Scriptures ! No one can shake our faith in Don Quixote, although the accounts of the Knight " without fear and without reproach " are so short and vague. There is no doubt about the travels of Christian, although those of Stanley may be questioned. The Vicar of Wakefield is a much more actual personage than Peter who preached the Crusades. Sir Roger de Coverley and his squire life are much more probable to us than Sir William Temple in his gardens ♣ There is no character in romance who has not or might not have lived, but we are thrown into grave doubts of the saintly Washington and the devilish Napoleon depicted three quarters of a century ago. We cast history aside in scepticism and disgust ; we cling to romance with faith and delight ♣ " The things that are seen are temporal ; the things that are not seen are eternal." So let the writer hereof sing a song in praise of

MY FRIENDS THE BOOKS.

FRIENDS of my youth and of my age
Within my chamber wait,
Until I fondly turn the page
And prove them wise and great.

At me they do not rudely glare
With eye that luster lacks,
But knowing how I hate a stare,
Politely turn their backs.

They never split my head with din,
Nor snuffle through their noses,
Nor admiration seek to win
By inartistic poses.

If I should chance to fall asleep,
They do not scowl or snap,
But prudently their counsel keep
Till I have had my nap.

And if I choose to rout them out
Unseasonably at night,
They do not chafe nor curse nor pout,
But rise all clothed and bright.

They ne'er intrude with silly say,
They never scold nor worry ;
They ne'er suspect and ne'er betray,
They're never in a hurry.

Anacreon never gets quite full,
Nor Horace too flirtatious ;
Swift makes due fun of Johnny Bull,
And Addison is gracious.

Saint-Simon and Grammont rehearse
Their tales of court with glee ;

For all their scandal I'm no worse,—
They never peach on me.

For what I owe Montaigne, no dread
To meet him on the morrow ;
And better still, it must be said,
He never wants to borrow.

Paul never asks, though sure to preach,
Why I don't come to church ;
Though Dr. Johnson strives to teach,
I do not fear his birch.

My Dickens never is away
Whene'er I choose to call ;
I need not wait for Thackeray
In chill palatial hall.

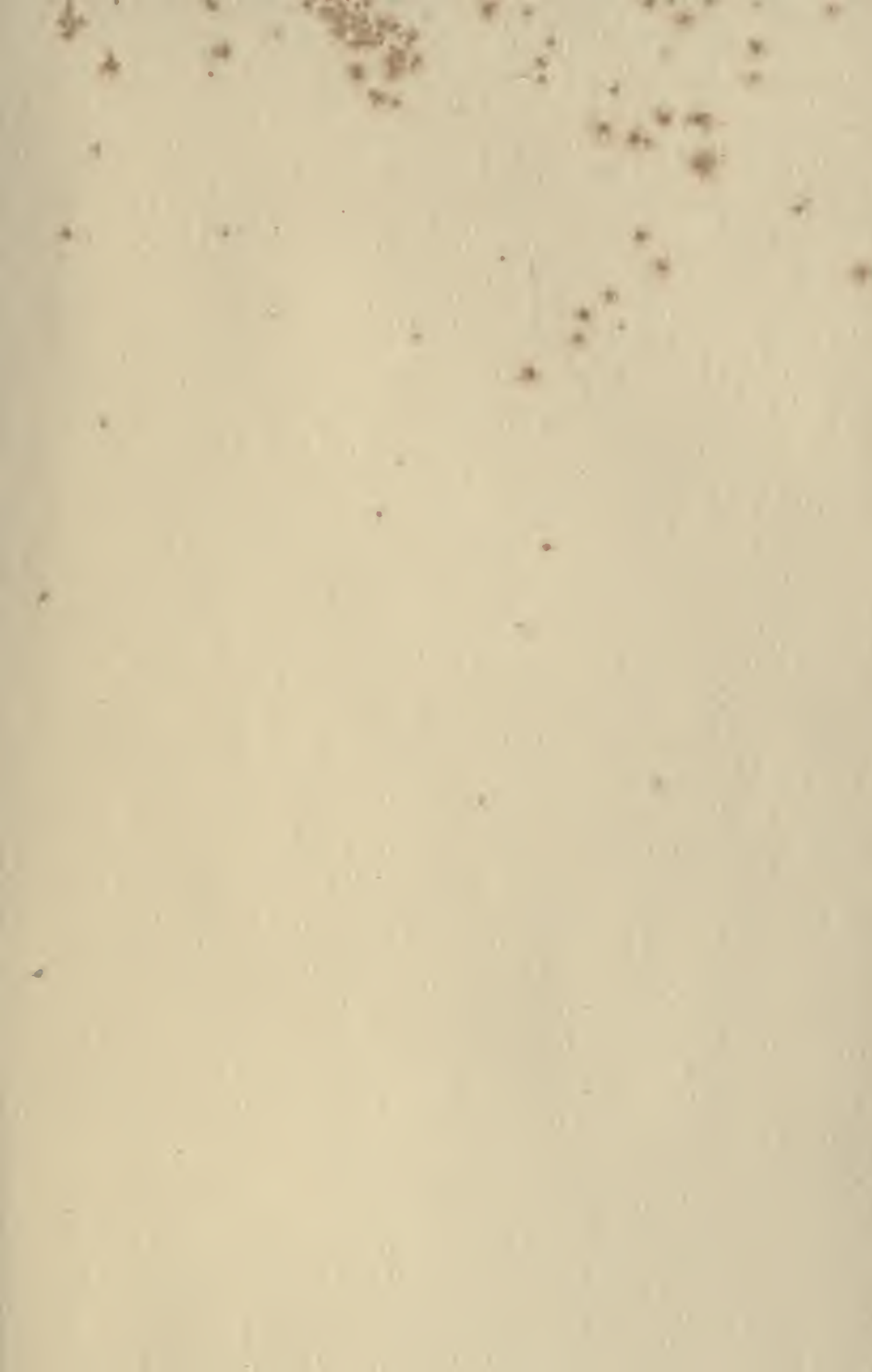
I help to bring Amelia to,
Who always is a-fainting ;
I love the Oxford graduate who
Explains great Turner's painting.

My memory is full of graves
Of friends in days gone by ;
But Time these sweet companions saves,—
These friends who never die !

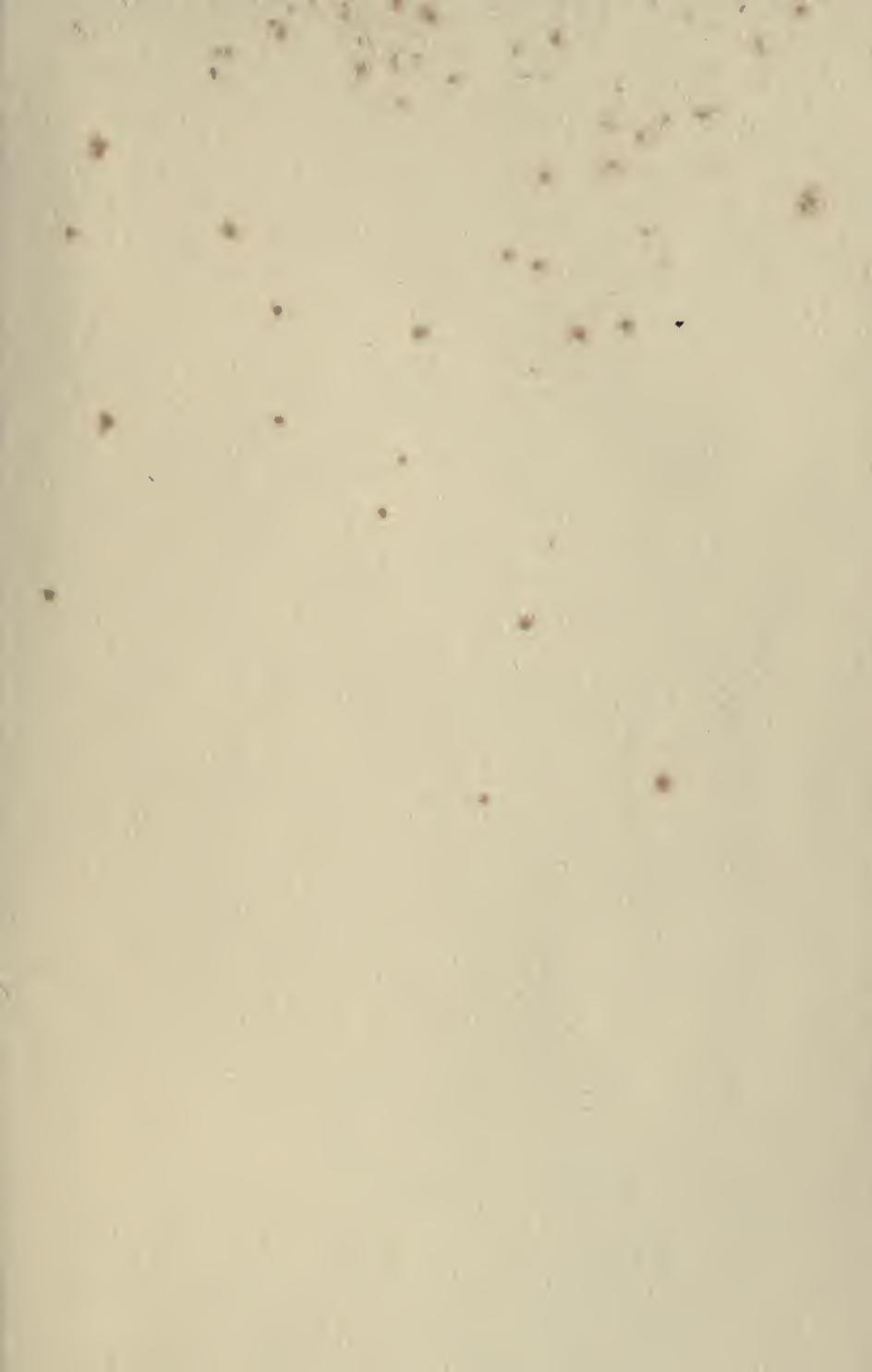


SO HERE ENDETH "IN THE TRACK OF THE
BOOK-WORM." ♣ PRINTED BY ME, ELBERT
HUBBARD, AT THE ROYCROFT SHOP ♣ IN
EAST AURORA, N. Y., U. S. A., AND COM-
PLETED THIS TWENTY-SIXTH DAY OF ♣
JUNE, MDCCCXCVII.









Mycrofters/1857

